

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
7:30 p.m. - 9:07 p.m.

WebEx

Volume 6
Pages 1 - 64

JOHN CLARK, Presiding
SENIOR REGULATORY LAW JUDGE

KAYLA HAHN, Chair
MAIDA J. COLEMAN,
JASON R. HOLSMAN,
JOHN MITCHELL,
COMMISSIONERS

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Beverly Jean Bentch, RPR, CCR No. 640

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1 The following proceedings began at 7:30 p.m.:

2 JUDGE CLARK: I'm going to go ahead and begin
3 the public comment part of the local public hearing.
4 This is the formal part of the hearing. We're going to
5 go on the record now. Good evening. It is January 23rd
6 of 2025, and the current time is 7:37 p.m. You just
7 finished the question and answer portion of the local
8 public hearing. If you had questions about this rate
9 increase request by Ameren Missouri, I hope you were
10 able to get those questions answered.

11 Now, the Missouri Public Service Commission
12 has set aside this time for a local public hearing in
13 the file ER-2024-0319, which is a general rate case
14 captioned as In the Matter of Union Electric Company
15 d/b/a as Ameren Missouri's Tariffs to Adjust its
16 Revenues for Electric Service.

17 My name is John Clark. I'm the Regulatory Law
18 Judge presiding over this hearing tonight. The Missouri
19 Public Service Commission regulates the rates charged by
20 investor-owned utility companies in Missouri to ensure
21 that those rates are just and reasonable. The
22 Commission also regulates the quality of service and the
23 safety of operations of investor-owned utilities.

24 The Commission is made up of five
25 Commissioners: The Chair of the Commission Kayla Hahn

1 and Commissioners Maida Coleman, Jason Holsman, Glen
2 Kolkmeier and John Mitchell. The Commissioners are
3 appointed by the Governor to a fixed term and are
4 confirmed by the Senate.

5 The Commissioners employ a staff of engineers,
6 accountants, attorneys, financial analysts and other
7 experts in the field of utility regulation. With me
8 today are Commissioners Coleman, Mitchell and Chair
9 Hahn. Other Commissioners --

10 COMMISSIONER HOLSMAN: Holsman is also on.

11 JUDGE CLARK: And Commissioner Holsman. Thank
12 you, Commissioner Holsman. Commissioner Kolkmeier may
13 join us. He may join by WebEx. He may not. Those are
14 the four Commissioners we have with us at this point.

15 Commissioner Coleman, would you like to make
16 any opening remarks?

17 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Yes, I would. Thank
18 you, Judge Clark. On behalf of Chairwoman Hahn and all
19 the Commissioners, I thank you for signing in to this
20 local public hearing tonight. We are here to listen to
21 your public testimony and to take those comments and
22 concerns into consideration regarding the case before
23 us.

24 It is important that we have this input and
25 that we appreciate your attendance. Again, thank you

1 for your time and comments. Thank you, Judge.

2 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Commissioner Coleman.
3 Now, as I indicated, this is a formal part of the
4 hearing. This is our opportunity to hear from the
5 public regarding Ameren's request. Because this is a
6 formal part of the hearing, if you're offering comments
7 to the Commission, I will be placing you under oath and
8 I will be asking you to state and spell your name for
9 the court reporter.

10 **A court reporter is taking everything down and**
11 **it will be transcribed so that the Commission and myself**
12 **can review it at a later point. I'm going to start this**
13 **hearing by asking counsel for the parties to enter their**
14 **appearance for the record. Starting with Ameren**
15 **Missouri.**

16 MR. LOWERY: Thank you, Judge. James B.
17 Lowery on behalf of Ameren Missouri. My contact
18 information is part of the record.

19 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Ameren. On behalf of
20 the Commission Staff.

21 MR. KEEVIL: Yes, Judge. For PSC Staff, Jeff
22 Keevil. Address is 200 Madison Street, PO Box 360,
23 Jefferson City, Missouri 65102.

24 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Staff. On behalf of
25 the Office of the Public Counsel.

1 MS. VanGERPEN: Lindsay VanGerpen on behalf of
2 the Office of the Public Counsel. Our address is 200
3 Madison Street, Jefferson City.

4 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Public Counsel. Are
5 there any intervenors present? I hear none. Now, for
6 those who would like to provide comments today, I'm
7 going to call the names that were provided to me on a
8 list in the order that they were provided. If we get to
9 the end and we still have time, I will at that time ask
10 if anybody else would like to offer testimony.

11 When I call your name, please state and spell
12 your name for the court reporter, I'll place you under
13 oath and then you can offer your comments to the
14 Commission. Now, there's a number of people here
15 tonight and throughout these public hearings I've
16 limited comments to three minutes. So what I'm going to
17 be doing is when we hit around the three-minute mark,
18 I'm going to let you know and that will give you an
19 opportunity to finish your sentence or thought before we
20 move on to the next person.

21 The Commission wants to take as many comments
22 as possible tonight from the people that have attended.
23 So I'm going to try and roll through people relatively
24 quickly, but I do want to hear what you have to say.
25 Also, after you're finished offering comments to the

1 Commission, please wait just a second before you mute
2 yourself or log off because I may have questions, the
3 Commissioners may have questions, or the attorneys for
4 the parties may have questions. If the attorneys for
5 the parties have a question, please let me know. If the
6 Commissioners have a question, please just go ahead and
7 ask the question whenever you would like.

8 Now, the Commission won't be able to answer
9 your questions tonight, and that's because this is a
10 pending case before the Commission and it hasn't had an
11 evidentiary hearing yet. And they have to remain
12 impartial until after evidence is presented at the
13 hearing. If you have questions, I would refer you to
14 speak to the Company, Ameren Missouri, to the Commission
15 Staff or the Office of the Public Counsel. You can
16 contact any of them.

17 I'm also going to remind you that there's a
18 lot of people here. Please be courteous and treat
19 everyone speaking here today as you would like them to
20 treat you. With that in mind, I'm going to start
21 calling the first name. First name I have signed up is
22 Patricia Armstrong. Ms. Armstrong, are you present?

23 MS. ARMSTRONG: I'm present. I just had
24 myself muted.

25 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Would you please state

1 and spell your name for the record?

2 MS. ARMSTRONG: Patricia, P-a-t-r-i-c-i-a,
3 Armstrong, A-r-m-s-t-r-o-n-g.

4 JUDGE CLARK: And would you raise your right
5 hand to be sworn? Do you solemnly swear or affirm that
6 the comments you are about to offer to the Public
7 Service Commission are the truth?

8 MS. ARMSTRONG: I do.

9 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. What would you like to
10 tell the Commission this evening?

11 MS. ARMSTRONG: Thank you for letting me
12 speak. I'm 73 years old, and I am against at least the
13 size of this rate increase if not the entire increase.
14 My only source of income is Social Security. Now, I did
15 receive a raise of \$54 on my income this year, but my
16 Medicare premium went up by \$10.30. And my rent
17 increased by \$55. If you compile all of those together,
18 my increase is now a negative \$11.30 each month. So
19 budgetwise I'm in worse shape this year than last.

20 My groceries cost more than maybe a lot of
21 peoples because I'm diabetic. Everything has to be
22 sugar free. I also have to hunt for low salt because I
23 have high blood pressure. Sugar free foods cost a lot
24 more. As an example, at Schnuck's 32 ounces of cane
25 sugar costs \$2.99. By comparison, half that amount of

1 sweetener, 16 ounces, costs \$7.59. However, they
2 measure equally in recipes. One tablespoon to one
3 tablespoon, one cup to one cup.

4 All prices are continuing to rise. It doesn't
5 matter if it's your OTC items, a box of Band-Aids,
6 compression stockings. Everything you need is higher in
7 price and those prices are continuing to climb. If we
8 get the tariffs, which looks likely, they're going to
9 climb even more.

10 My apartment is 100 percent electric. It's a
11 little one-room efficiency and I love it. If I can't
12 keep up with my Ameren bill and I don't qualify for
13 their aid, I'll lose my lights, heating,
14 air-conditioning and the ability to store food safely
15 and to cook or warm up food. Rising prices in so many
16 areas right now are squeezing me out of a previously
17 frugal lifestyle into semi poverty living on the edge of
18 losing my housing, adequate food or necessary medicines.

19 If I become homeless, I don't even own a car
20 to sleep in. My budget just can't afford an increase,
21 especially one this big. So I'm asking you to reject or
22 majorly reduce this rate increase request by Ameren.
23 Thank you for listening and hearing me.

24 JUDGE CLARK: Ms. Armstrong, thank you very
25 much for offering your comments to the Commission. Next

1 person I have signed up is Tammy Sneaks (phonetic
2 spelling). Is a Ms. Sneaks here?

3 MS. VanGERPEN: Judge, Judge Clark, I
4 apologize. This is Lindsay with OPC. Could you remind
5 everyone how to get off mute if they're on the
6 telephone.

7 JUDGE CLARK: I think that's an excellent
8 idea. Thank you, Lindsay. I did not think to do that
9 and we are on WebEx. If you have joined by phone and
10 you are trying to unmute to speak, you want to press
11 star six on your phone. With that in mind, I'll call
12 Tammy Sneaks again. Robert Miller. David Tabor
13 (phonetic spelling). John Stagg (phonetic spelling). A
14 lot of these names I received well in advance of this
15 hearing. I'm not sure that all these people have
16 attended this hearing. Marcelina (phonetic spelling)
17 Williams. Ms. Williams, again, if you are joining by
18 phone and you need to unmute yourself, press star six.
19 James Eilers (phonetic spelling). James Eilers. Sorry
20 Eilers. James Eilers. Victoria Seegle (phonetic
21 spelling). Victoria Seegle. Debra Ahrenson (phonetic
22 spelling). Kate Minchinhelmin (phonetic spelling). Is
23 there a Kate Minchinhelmin?

24 Okay. Those are the people I had signed up in
25 advance. My understanding is that several people

1 indicated that they wanted to testify during the Q&A and
2 that was provided to me. Brett Felber.

3 MR. FELBER: Yes, Your Honor.

4 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Felber, would you please
5 state and spell your name for the record.

6 MR. FELBER: Brett, B-r-e-t-t, last name
7 Felber, F-e-l-b-e-r.

8 JUDGE CLARK: And Mr. Felber, would you raise
9 your right hand and be sworn? Do you solemnly swear or
10 affirm that the comments you're about to offer the
11 Commission this evening are the truth?

12 MR. FELBER: I do.

13 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to tell
14 the Commission this evening about this rate increase
15 request?

16 MR. FELBER: You know, first and foremost I
17 want to thank Ameren for not sending me out a letter
18 about the hearing or anything and not even sending me a
19 text. I'm pretty sure they purposely did that. Ameren
20 hates me. Whatever. I'm not going to argue about that.

21 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Felber, you didn't receive a
22 text or information about when the hearings were?

23 MR. FELBER: Nope, never did. The only way I
24 found it is because I have a current matter in front of
25 them, uh-huh. That's the only thing. But I'm pretty

1 sure they sent it from their non-invoice, you know,
2 telephone or maybe their fake email address probably.
3 Let me go ahead and get into everything.

4 Ameren talks about all these things, you know,
5 payment plans, options for people and everything. I
6 would recommend you guys, if you have to use one of
7 them, get to know the Commission rules and everything.
8 It's like dealing with Ameren, I am actually currently
9 in a complaint with the Commission on it as well too.
10 They're actually trying to use some of my testimony to
11 get a rate hike. They put information that has not been
12 resolved or whatever yet. In fact --

13 MR. LOWERY: Your Honor --

14 JUDGE CLARK: Yes, Mr. Lowery.

15 MR. LOWERY: Jim Lowery. I'm going to have to
16 interpose an objection to the extent Mr. Felber wants to
17 comment on his pending complaint --

18 MR. FELBER: I'm not going to comment on it.

19 MR. LOWERY: -- that may be taking place at
20 this point. I think the purpose of this hearing --

21 MR. FELBER: The purpose is to get it out.

22 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Felber, wait just a second.

23 MR. LOWERY: I would object to the extent that
24 he's going to go down that road.

25 MR. FELBER: I want to talk to you about your

1 counterfeit documents that you gave me, Mr. Lowery.

2 JUDGE CLARK: Hold on.

3 MR. FELBER: I want to talk about that.

4 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Felber, please let me speak.

5 I'm the Judge.

6 MR. FELBER: This is exactly what this guy
7 does. They claim harassment when you prove out facts.

8 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Mr. Lowery has lodged an
9 objection to this testimony. This is a local public
10 hearing. This is for the public to offer comments.
11 It's to offer comments on this rate hearing or this rate
12 request by Ameren Missouri which by statute takes
13 precedent because of the large number of people it
14 affects. We're not here to talk about a private
15 individual complaint to the extent that it is not
16 germane to this local public hearing concerning a rate
17 increase. However, Mr. Felber is certainly the public,
18 and Mr. Felber certainly has a right to offer an opinion
19 on the rate case.

20 However, Mr. Felber, I am not going to let you
21 talk about your personal complaint cases. So if you
22 have comments you would like to offer on the rate case,
23 I am more than happy to do so, but I'm not going to talk
24 about current or past complaints before the Commission
25 at this hearing. Do you have things that you would like

1 to say about Ameren's current rate increase request?

2 And if you could unmute him so he could speak, I would
3 appreciate it. I think you may have to unmute,
4 Mr. Felber.

5 MR. FELBER: Okay. There we go.

6 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Did you hear what I said,
7 Mr. Felber?

8 MR. FELBER: I did hear what you said, Your
9 Honor. With all due respect, if you're using a matter
10 of mine to get a rate increase, I should be able to go
11 public about it, especially when it informs the public
12 that it's deceitful; is that right?

13 JUDGE CLARK: I'm not sure exactly what you're
14 talking about, but again -- I'm sorry?

15 MR. FELBER: So I have in front of me right
16 here rebuttal testimony from Staff of the Commission.
17 You know what, I'll go ahead and put it to you guys this
18 way. Take a look around. I've been dealing with them
19 for a year and a half and this is what happens. You get
20 met with lawyers that try to abuse their bar numbers and
21 everything. The lady that actually did it is on this
22 phone call, and she actually has a criminal complaint
23 actually lodged against her. Tomorrow I'm going to the
24 Cole County prosecutor to execute on going ahead and
25 fully going forward with it. The rate hike is not a

1 rate. It's misleading. It's actually to pay their
2 legal fees in Rush Island, as well as their legal fees
3 that are going out of St. Charles County right now. It
4 has nothing to do with an actual rate hike. If you
5 actually look at the paperwork of the audit, the numbers
6 are off by millions. And I'm not talking one or two
7 million. I'm talking big numbers here. But I've dealt
8 with all of them before in the past and here's what they
9 do. They try to shut you down. Then after that here's
10 what happens. They go ahead and block you from filing
11 in EFIS, because they don't want your stuff to go
12 public. Here's the funny part. They throw their
13 position around I'm Regulatory Judge. Oh, I'm the judge
14 over here. I'm the Staff. Guess what. That's an abuse
15 of power. It doesn't give you a right to not answer a
16 question or let somebody do it. All this is is a public
17 thing. I recommend people look into it. Warren Wood is
18 on the same advisory board, FRI, as Kayla Hahn, the
19 Commissioner, who has not even been told of a conflict
20 of interest. That's part of the rate hike hearing, too.

21 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Felber, what does that have
22 to do with Ameren's rate increase request?

23 MR. FELBER: That would be a conflict of
24 interest, Your Honor, because they're on the same board.
25 If I believe right, is it true that Ameren donated

1 generous money to FRI, along with Evergy, Spire and MSD?
2 They could have favoritism.

3 Speaking of that, why don't you tell them your
4 affiliation, Your Honor, with Kayla Hahn and Warren
5 Wood.

6 JUDGE CLARK: I'm not going to take your bait
7 on this one, Mr. Felber. I am going to let you know
8 that you've hit three minutes. Do you have anything
9 else you want to say about this rate increase request?

10 MR. FELBER: Guys, take a look around. This
11 is exactly what happens when you catch them like this.
12 This is what they do. And then even though they use
13 their attorney privilege when you show them facts, they
14 accuse you of harassment. The Commission regurgitates
15 the same thing that Ameren does, and they don't even
16 know their own statutes what they look for because
17 that's why we're still in the same problem we are. You
18 take it easy, Your Honor buddy, you've proved my point.

19 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Felber, good, bad or
20 otherwise, the Commission appreciates comments and I
21 appreciate your comments tonight.

22 MR. FELBER: I appreciate you allowing me to
23 go ahead and get it off. I would talk to Mr. Lowery
24 about his anger issues. It was kind of rude for him to
25 interrupt me, don't you think, for a lawyer?

1 JUDGE CLARK: Not for an objection. That's
2 the purpose of an objection. I am going to mute you
3 now. Thank you for your comments.

4 All right. Next up I have, and pardon me if I
5 mispronounce your name, please let me know. Elizabeth
6 Stuckenschneider. Did I say that correct?

7 MS. STUCKENSCHNEIDER: It's Stuckenschneider.

8 JUDGE CLARK: Stuckenschneider. I apologize.

9 MS. STUCKENSCHNEIDER: Stuckenschneider, yes.

10 JUDGE CLARK: Ms. Stuckenschneider, would you
11 spell your name for the record?

12 MS. STUCKENSCHNEIDER: Yes, it is
13 E-l-i-z-a-b-e-t-h S-t-u-c-k-e-n-s-c-h-n-e-i-d-e-r.

14 JUDGE CLARK: That's a lot to have to spell
15 out. Would you mind raising your right hand to be
16 sworn?

17 MS. STUCKENSCHNEIDER: Yes.

18 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or affirm
19 that the comments you're about to offer to the
20 Commission are the truth?

21 MS. STUCKENSCHNEIDER: Yes.

22 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to tell
23 the Commission this evening?

24 MS. STUCKENSCHNEIDER: So I've grown up in
25 this area. I was born here. I was born in St. Mary's

1 Hospital before it got torn down. I've lived here, you
2 know, for the last 33 years of my life. And I did not
3 grow up necessarily wealthy or affluent. I was on the
4 free or reduced lunch. I went to St. Martins for a
5 year. We got sent home with some free food that had
6 gotten donated from good samaritans. And there was at
7 least one winter where our power got shut off. It was
8 the dead of winter. This was in the '90s before the law
9 got passed that made it so if the temperatures were
10 below a certain point that it couldn't be shut off.

11 My mom bought us sleeping bags so that we
12 could still be warm in our beds at night. And then
13 later around the 2008 recession whenever I was a
14 teenager, our power got shut off again. So I know at
15 least some of the struggle that people are facing in
16 Missouri. And I enjoy having affordable power. I enjoy
17 that we have a low cost of living in this state and I
18 would like it to stay that way.

19 Bills are really tight right now. I've come
20 to the conclusion that honestly unless I start raising
21 chickens I'm probably not going to have eggs for the
22 next few months and I'm going to have to watch all my
23 other utilities. I just had to switch internet
24 providers because my bill kept going up. It was just
25 getting to the point where even though I make about

1 40,000 a year and my husband makes about 40,000 a year,
2 bills were just getting to be too much for us to try and
3 keep up. And so I'm afraid that people are still going
4 to fall through the cracks even with any assistance
5 programs that we have. That happens. I've seen that.
6 People will not get food stamps because they make
7 slightly too much money and then they can't, you know,
8 they can't get their food. They might make slightly too
9 much to get on any sort of government assistance
10 programs. And I don't like this rate hike because I
11 don't want anyone to have to do what my mother did when
12 our power got shut off. And I don't think 15 percent is
13 fair.

14 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Stuckenschneider.
15 I appreciate your comments. Jaclyn Kiszczak.

16 MS. KISZCZAK: Very close. A lot of people
17 mispronounce it. It's Kiszczak.

18 JUDGE CLARK: Kiszczak; is that correct?

19 MS. KISZCZAK: Yes.

20 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Ms. Kiszczak, would you
21 please spell your name for the record and then I'll
22 swear you in?

23 MS. KISZCZAK: Jaclyn, J-a-c-l-y-n, Kiszczak,
24 K-i-s-z-c-z-a-k.

25 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or affirm

1 that the comments you're about to offer to the
2 Commission this evening are the truth?

3 MS. KISZCZAK: Yes, I do.

4 JUDGE CLARK: Please go ahead.

5 MS. KISZCZAK: First of all, thank you
6 everyone for the comments you have had to make and for
7 your respectfulness. Thank you for Ameren for being
8 willing to hear us and for the Commission being willing
9 to hear us as well. I do understand, as my grandfather
10 was a business owner, I understand that Ameren needs to
11 make increases. It's not just that we can have -- that
12 our prices always be the same. Totally understand that.

13 But I don't think as Your Honor said that
14 these prices, the wording you said is that the purpose
15 of the Commission is to make sure that this rate
16 increase is just and reasonable. And I think as someone
17 said during the meeting earlier this evening that this
18 potential rate increase is quite tone deaf. I've looked
19 up some information about Ameren specifically in
20 Missouri and I found that their net profit margin in
21 2023 was 14.24 percent which equated with their total
22 revenue in 2023 as \$7.27 billion and ended up figuring
23 out their net profit as a result of that is \$10,352,480.
24 That's net profit. That means after cost of anything
25 that is involved with running their business. So I

1 think having enough profit in just Missouri of over \$10
2 million, I understand that there are investments that
3 need to be made. I just think with having a net profit
4 of \$10 million they seem to be doing okay. For the last
5 several years prior to the pandemic and after the
6 pandemic they seem to be doing okay with a very high net
7 profit margin as well. I could naturally go on with how
8 the CEO has continued to have a pay increase and
9 currently he's paid over \$2 million a year.

10 So I think it's appropriate for the higher ups
11 of any company to be the first people to do what we all
12 as Americans have been told for decades is to tighten
13 your boot straps and take some pay cuts, take a pay cut
14 somewhere. I understand it's not going to be every
15 higher up that's going to take a huge pay cut, but I
16 think it's only fair that they take at least somewhat of
17 a pay cut before they ask their customers to begin to
18 start to pay more money.

19 I personally, my husband and I, can't afford
20 the bills, but in a couple years it's going to be a lot
21 harder. A lot of people aren't able to pay these bills.
22 So I think, Judge, I would ask you and the Commission
23 please take into advice that it's becoming more and more
24 expensive for people to make it by, to be able to afford
25 eggs, as Beth so well put, to be able to afford milk, to

1 be able to afford just the basics of living. And it's
2 not that they're not trying. They are. I've seen these
3 people. I work with them. They're not --

4 JUDGE CLARK: I'm going to let you know you're
5 at three minutes.

6 MS. KISZCZAK: Thank you for telling me,
7 Judge. People are doing their best. I would just ask
8 that you not allow this egregious request of a rate
9 increase, and that is the end of my testimony. Thank
10 you, Judge.

11 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Kiszczak. Thank
12 you for your comments before the Commission. I've
13 noticed that some of you are using the chat function.
14 The chat function is not part of the record of this
15 local public hearing. If you're using the chat
16 function, the stuff that's in the chat function does not
17 make it into the transcript. So I'd ask that you not
18 use that to try and comment on what people say. But Ms.
19 Kiszczak, thank you for your comments. James Fatoye.
20 Am I saying that right?

21 MR. FATOYE: Yeah, close enough, Your Honor.
22 It's James Fatoye. Actually not quite close but yeah,
23 thank you, Your Honor.

24 JUDGE CLARK: I'm not going to try and say it
25 again because I don't want to butcher it twice.

1 MR. FATOYE: Oh, no, please, you're fine.
2 You're just there. Just like Fatoye.

3 JUDGE CLARK: Fatoye.

4 MR. FATOYE: One step further.

5 JUDGE CLARK: Why don't you just spell it for
6 the record and then I'll swear you in and you can make
7 your comments.

8 MR. FATOYE: Thank you, Your Honor. It's
9 James, J-a-m-e-s, Fatoye, F-a-t-o-y-e.

10 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or affirm
11 that the comments you're about to offer the Commission
12 this evening are the truth?

13 MR. FATOYE: I do.

14 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Go right ahead.

15 MR. FATOYE: Yeah. Not much to add, just
16 mostly reiteration of what a lot of the people have
17 said. Thank you, Ameren, for your time and thank you,
18 Your Honor, for helping through this. And thank you to
19 everyone that's come in and shared some personal
20 anecdotes. Yeah, I appreciate all of your time.

21 I just want to state, or I guess again
22 reiterate that what Ameren provides us, it's not a
23 luxury. It's electricity. People can, will and have
24 died from not having access to it. Especially in sub
25 zero temperatures like we experienced this weekend,

1 other extreme situations.

2 I don't see how we can justify in good
3 conscience a 15 percent hike when, this question was
4 asked over and over again during the Q&A, of what Ameren
5 will do for people that already can't keep up with their
6 bills. And there was never really a clear answer. I
7 think the closest we got was maybe, maybe some of this
8 price hike will go towards it. However, when we asked
9 how much executives and stakeholders and the like will
10 get out of this price hike, there was at least a clearer
11 answer there. I think that number was 3 percent
12 increase in pay.

13 I don't see how people can be asked to risk
14 their lives for 3 percent, people that already don't
15 have enough, be asked to risk their lives for a 3
16 percent, among other things of course, including a 3
17 percent increase in pay for people that already quite
18 frankly have more than enough. And yeah, that's all I
19 really have to testify. Thank you for your time.

20 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, James, for your
21 comments.

22 MR. FATOYE: Thank you. By the way, just for
23 the record, I kind of reflex here, James is my middle
24 name. First name is Ayo, A-y-o. I don't know if that
25 was important. Yeah, thank you for your time. I hope

1 you have a good rest of your day.

2 JUDGE CLARK: You as well. Thank you so much.
3 Alexandra Roper.

4 MS. ROPER: Hello.

5 JUDGE CLARK: Ms. Roper, would you please
6 state and spell your name for the record?

7 MS. ROPER: Yes. My name is Alexandra Roper,
8 A-l-e-x-a-n-d-r-a, last name Roper, R-o-p-e-r.

9 JUDGE CLARK: Would you raise your right hand
10 to be sworn? Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the
11 comments you're about to give to the Commission are the
12 truth?

13 MS. ROPER: Yes.

14 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Go right ahead.

15 MS. ROPER: So I'd like to try to keep this
16 concise for you. I know that there's many of us in
17 here. So I will simply say that I disapprove of the
18 proposal by Ameren in the case of the docket
19 ER-2024-0319. They failed to provide adequate
20 information on previous financial expenses primarily in
21 the case of a \$47 million smart grid grant from the US
22 Department of Energy's Grid Resilience and Innovation
23 Partnerships. This grant was met with the Company's own
24 investment of \$54 million. And according to the
25 previous Q&A session just earlier, this total of 101

1 million has not been distributed nor projected in future
2 budgets and their expenses costs. Even if the 47
3 million has not been distributed from the US, there's
4 still \$54 million in the Company's own assets that are
5 currently not being utilized to repair grid
6 infrastructure. On top of this lack of financial
7 transparency, the topic of regional upgrades over a
8 select amount of years has seemingly been disregarded.

9 It is also clear knowledge that \$1,152,000,000
10 have been made in investments in 2024 alone, according
11 to public websites including your own press statements,
12 and yet there's no reinvestment being seen into the
13 Company's budget to repair grid infrastructure or aim to
14 provide low costs to the customers of the companies.
15 These customers which respectfully -- When customers
16 only due to the fact that there's a natural monopoly.
17 As someone who handles phone calls personally from those
18 needing assistance, at least 10 to 15 times a week I get
19 calls for assistance with utilities, including Ameren.

20 I'm here to try to stand up not only for
21 myself who is living paycheck to paycheck, also to stand
22 for those who are in my community who could not be here
23 tonight and also cannot afford such financial burdens in
24 an already economically devastating time.

25 If Ameren can justify a lower increase in the

1 future, they might one day have my approval because I
2 understand that there are costs to any business. But
3 until then, I cannot agree with the Company financially
4 murdering their customers only out of the greed of
5 capitalism. Thank you very much for your time.

6 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Roper, for your
7 comments. Ronetta Lloyd.

8 MS. LLOYD: How did I know I was going to go
9 after that?

10 JUDGE CLARK: You like to be called Roni; is
11 that correct?

12 MS. LLOYD: I do, sir, thank you.

13 JUDGE CLARK: Ms. Lloyd, would you please
14 spell your name for the record?

15 MS. LLOYD: R-o-n-e-t-t-a L-l-o-y-d.

16 JUDGE CLARK: And do you solemnly swear or
17 affirm that the comments you're about to give to the
18 Commission this evening are the truth?

19 MS. LLOYD: I do.

20 JUDGE CLARK: What would you like to tell the
21 Commission this evening?

22 MS. LLOYD: Well, sir, after that last
23 testimony, I champion everything Ms. Alexandra said and
24 just want to share with the court that myself and my
25 husband are a hard working middle class family. I'm a

1 veteran. He's a union man. We have four children and
2 we are working hard to survive.

3 It is unfair in a lot of ways that the money
4 we make stays the same but everything else is going up
5 around us. It's not a matter of us not wanting to pay
6 our bills, because we absolutely want to. We're just
7 really, really pinched when it comes to it. Case in
8 point I've had situations with Ameren most importantly
9 with my own utility bills. My electric bill was \$500
10 from June until September. The peak billing is a joke.
11 It's unheard of. I work from home. I can tell you what
12 is running from what hour to what hour. It was unheard
13 of.

14 Now, as we tried to manage those bills and
15 move through the summer up until the winter, there were
16 no programs available to us. Why? Because we made too
17 much money. So the assistance opportunities for a
18 middle class family, they weren't there.

19 I asked for an extension just to give me a
20 couple more days to pay the bill. They told me they
21 could not. I can't remember why because I started to
22 cry. I couldn't get the extension. Do you know that
23 they turned my electric off. The next -- not the next
24 morning but it was like a Wednesday at eight o'clock
25 they turned my electric off. And I just cried, because

1 I knew that I just needed a little bit more time. The
2 money that they made me spend right then and there was
3 for something else. Ameren said then everything else
4 you got going on we want to get paid now. There was
5 nothing for me to help me. So something else had to
6 suffer.

7 I'm totally against this. I'm totally against
8 the ask of it. I feel like it's kind of insulting to
9 now hear some of the detailed research around their
10 profits and how they've been receiving so many grants
11 and tax incentives and, you know, now they want to
12 increase everything on us to include their own salaries.
13 Wow, what a slap in the face and to know that they've
14 turned off so many in our community because we can't
15 afford to pay. 13 percent I want to say was help in
16 this assistance 158,000 households I think they said
17 they helped and you want to raise our rates.

18 So I don't want to take up much time. I
19 champion everything Ms. Alexandra said and just want to
20 share our story as a hard working middle class family
21 that I completely protest this increase. I appreciate
22 the opportunity.

23 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Lloyd, for your
24 comments. I am going to say if somebody else has said
25 something that has resonated with you or if somebody

1 else has said something and you for the sake of time
2 just want to let the Commission know that you also have
3 those concerns or deal with those issues, you're more
4 than welcome to do so. Marybeth. And again, if you're
5 joining by telephone, use star six to unmute. Is there
6 a Marybeth?

7 MS. FRIEDERICH: Hi. Hello.

8 JUDGE CLARK: Yes, I can hear you.

9 MS. FRIEDERICH: My name is Kathy Friederich,
10 K-a-t-h-y F-r-i-e-d-e-r-i-c-h.

11 JUDGE CLARK: Your name is Kathleen
12 Friederich?

13 MS. FRIEDERICH: Yes, Kathy or Kathleen, yes,
14 uh-huh.

15 JUDGE CLARK: I called a Marybeth.

16 MS. STAUDE: Hello.

17 JUDGE CLARK: Yes, is there a Marybeth there
18 or just you?

19 MS. FRIEDERICH: No, just me.

20 JUDGE CLARK: Okay.

21 MS. STAUDE: No, I'm here but I'll let Kathy
22 go first.

23 MS. FRIEDERICH: Oh, thank you.

24 JUDGE CLARK: Is there somebody else there
25 wanting to speak?

1 MS. STAUDE: Yeah, this is Marybeth. I'll let
2 Kathy go first.

3 MS. FRIEDERICH: Thank you.

4 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Kathy, would you please
5 spell your name for the record?

6 MS. FRIEDERICH: Okay. K-a-t-h-y or Kathleen
7 F-r-i-e-d-e-r-i-c-h.

8 JUDGE CLARK: I think you did this already.
9 It's mainly for me because I didn't catch it the first
10 time. I just noted it was different.

11 MS. FRIEDERICH: Okay. I'm sorry. Kathleen,
12 K-a-t-h-l-e-e-n, last name Friederich,
13 F-r-i-e-d-e-r-i-c-h.

14 JUDGE CLARK: Ms. Friederich, would you raise
15 your right hand to be sworn? Do you solemnly swear or
16 affirm that the comments you're about to offer to the
17 Commission this evening are the truth?

18 MS. FRIEDERICH: I do.

19 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. And go ahead.

20 MS. FRIEDERICH: Okay. The utilities have an
21 opportunity in the state of Missouri to require the
22 consumers to prepay for their large utility power
23 plants, whether they're completed or not. They have
24 done this in other states and made money off of that and
25 the project was never completed.

1 Also, the utilities in the state of Missouri
2 earn a corporate profit of at least 9.4 percent, and I
3 don't think they need any additional advantages in
4 securing rate increases before the Missouri Public
5 Service Commission if they're already assured of that
6 opportunity to have that percentage of 9.4 percent. And
7 also I feel like in this state that the local utilities
8 are monopolistic because they prevent other investors
9 from competitively bidding on the transmission projects
10 unless the local utility, which would be Ameren, has
11 decided that they will not construct that project.

12 So I don't think this is fair for them to come
13 to people and ask them for more money. I think they
14 need to have consideration as other people have
15 mentioned that made their comments. Thank you.

16 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Friederich. I'm
17 sorry for the confusion over who was up to testify.
18 Marybeth, you wanted to testify as well; is that
19 correct?

20 MS. STAUDE: I do, please.

21 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Would you please spell
22 your name for the record.

23 MS. STAUDE: Sure. It's M-a-r-y-b-e-t-h.
24 Last name is S-t-a-u-d-e.

25 JUDGE CLARK: Would you raise your right hand

1 to be sworn. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the
2 comments you're about to offer to the Commission this
3 evening are the truth?

4 MS. STAUDE: Yes.

5 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to tell
6 the Commission?

7 MS. STAUDE: I just want to say I'm against
8 the rate hike, and I also wish you would take off the
9 junk fees.

10 JUDGE CLARK: And what are you -- When you say
11 "junk fees," how are you defining those just so that I
12 know?

13 MS. STAUDE: There are six lines. There's on
14 peak energy adjustment, there's a customer charge,
15 there's a fuel adjustment charge, energy efficiency
16 investment charge, renewable energy adjustment and Rush
17 Island retirement cost. So all of that on my current
18 bill is about \$33. Then you've got the sales tax which
19 I guess you have to have. So that's \$15. But those
20 junk fees are every month, and that's what they are.

21 I don't think they need to be on there. I
22 think it's just a way to increase your bill.

23 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for defining those for
24 me. Did you have any other comments you wanted to make
25 to the Commission tonight?

1 MS. STAUDE: No, I do not. Otherwise, I'm
2 just against it.

3 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Staude. I have a
4 first name Julie, no last name, joining us by telephone.

5 MS. COSTELLO: That was Grace Costello.

6 JUDGE CLARK: I also have a Grace. Grace is
7 the next person I have on my list. Is there a Julie?

8 Hi, Grace. I'm back. I for whatever reason
9 my application just closed on me so I apologize for
10 that. I believe I was trying to determine whether a
11 telephone user named Julie was able to testify and a Ms.
12 Grace had indicated she was ready to testify. Grace,
13 are you still there?

14 MS. COSTELLO: Yes, Grace Costello, Grace,
15 G-r-a-c-e, something that everyone needs a little grace,
16 Costello, C-o-s-t-e-l-l-o.

17 JUDGE CLARK: Ms. Costello, do you solemnly
18 swear or affirm that the comments you're about to offer
19 the Commission are the truth?

20 MS. COSTELLO: Yes.

21 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Go ahead.

22 MS. COSTELLO: I've been on the phone since
23 you guys started at six o'clock. I listened to the
24 comments. Some of them was saying they were middle
25 class. Guess what. I'm on a fixed income. Just had my

1 disability check taken away from me. So it's no way I
2 can pay \$18 extra on my electric bill.

3 I took pride before they took my disability
4 check. I took pride in paying my electric bill, never
5 left a balance. As I said to myself, you're doing good
6 to be able to pay whatever they say you owe. Two things
7 I do when I get my bill. I look at what you say I owe.
8 I look at when it's due. By me being on a fixed income,
9 my check come in the beginning of the month like the
10 3rd. My bill might not be due until the 15th. I send
11 that check to you Ameren the next day, which is the 4th.
12 I don't see why they would ask us to pay \$18 more on our
13 electric bill when we're struggling already. Now that
14 this new administration in, we don't even know if we'll
15 be able to have any insurance period if we got sick.

16 And the help that you do get, it only come
17 once a month like Urban League I applied for my gas
18 bill. This is not my first rodeo. I'm 76. And I
19 always noticed that in the summertime we get a break
20 from the gas company because you don't use your furnace.
21 In the wintertime we get a break from Ameren because we
22 don't use no air. But like the caller said earlier, she
23 had a \$500 electric bill and they still cut it off.
24 It's just no more compassion for people that's
25 struggling in this world.

1 I hope that the Commissioners, which I
2 appreciate you being there, because if you wasn't there,
3 these big corporations can just do whatever they want.
4 They're almost doing it anyway. But at least they can't
5 just do it.

6 JUDGE CLARK: I apologize. Go ahead. So for
7 you a \$17 increase is not something that is sustainable,
8 correct?

9 MS. COSTELLO: Right. Like I said, I'm old
10 school. I don't know about going online or internet. I
11 do my business either by phone or in person. So that's
12 why I know I wouldn't be able to pay the extra money
13 that Ameren is asking for. Like I said, I took pride
14 before they took my disability check, I took pride
15 because I never, never left a balance. Because it's
16 like a revolving door. You leave a balance, you never
17 get out of it.

18 JUDGE CLARK: Ms. Costello, thank you for your
19 comments. Thank you for letting us know.

20 MS. COSTELLO: Okay.

21 JUDGE CLARK: Clarence Travis.

22 MS. HARBISON: Sir, I'm Julie Harbison.

23 JUDGE CLARK: You said Harbison?

24 MS. HARBISON: Yes, sir.

25 JUDGE CLARK: Would you spell that for the

1 record?

2 MS. HARBISON: Yes, sir. It's
3 H-a-r-b-i-s-o-n, first name is Julie, J-u-l-i-e.

4 JUDGE CLARK: Ms. Harbison, would you raise
5 your right hand to be sworn. Do you solemnly swear or
6 affirm that the comments you're about to give to the
7 Commission are the truth?

8 MS. HARBISON: Yes, sir, I do.

9 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Go ahead.

10 MS. HARBISON: I just would like to say I've
11 never done this before, I don't have all the information
12 that everyone is coming up with. All I know is in my
13 heart I know that, and I don't think I'm wrong, that
14 Ameren has thousands of residences and businesses and as
15 I speak there are more and more homes coming up, more
16 and more buildings coming up, businesses, especially
17 where I live. And I know that that should be enough for
18 them to have the money that they need.

19 And I don't feel it's fair for them to ask us
20 to. I am on Social Security also. It's getting to the
21 point where I can almost not pay everything. And I know
22 how other people are feeling. I mean, even when I was
23 younger and my children were growing up I was robbing
24 Peter to pay Paul just to make sure I got that electric
25 bill and that house payment, you know. So I can imagine

1 what it's like for them now.

2 And I just ask that you guys don't do this.
3 And if you do have to, which I don't see how because,
4 you know, Ameren has the power plants and all, and
5 according to what I understand we pay for all of that.
6 And you know, we keep paying for it when it's actually
7 theirs. So it's frustrating for me to know that we're
8 constantly paying for all these things that they have
9 money for. I don't know for sure because I haven't, you
10 know, added amounts of money up like everyone else has.
11 I just know that there's no way that this can be. It's
12 not fair to people who can't afford it.

13 And so I'm asking that you all just think
14 about this and please, please don't do this to all these
15 people and to me. I worked my whole life so hard so
16 that I could retire and now I'm finding that I'm getting
17 so close to being where I can't pay things, and that's
18 totally not fair because we work our tails off our whole
19 lives. And so I'm asking that you guys don't do this.
20 I thank you for letting me speak. I appreciate the
21 Commissioners and also you, Judge, and you know, I just
22 know that the executives and shareholders, you know, can
23 do something about this when there's so many people that
24 live paycheck to paycheck. So thank you, sir.

25 JUDGE CLARK: Ms. Harbison, thank you very

1 much for your comments.

2 MS. HARBISON: Thank you, sir.

3 JUDGE CLARK: Clarence Travis. Is there a
4 Clarence Travis present?

5 MR. TRAVIS: Yes, Your Honor.

6 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Travis, would you spell your
7 name for the record.

8 MR. TRAVIS: Yes. First name Clarence,
9 C-l-a-r-e-n-c-e, last name Travis, T-r-a-v-i-s.

10 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or affirm
11 that the comments you're about to give the Commission
12 this evening are the truth?

13 MR. TRAVIS: I do.

14 JUDGE CLARK: What would you like to tell us,
15 Mr. Travis?

16 MR. TRAVIS: I can't figure out how to turn
17 the camera on. I am against the price increase. I
18 don't believe that this cost of operations should be
19 passed on to the customers. Every business has
20 operation cost and that's up to the CEO, COO to figure
21 out the best way to handle it. I think it's lazy, and I
22 think that it's inefficient that they're trying to just
23 dump the cost on us by the timing of this price hike
24 interesting following the hike, price increase of MSD's
25 last year.

1 You know, in the Q&A, they talked a lot about
2 -- well they referred us to the energy assistance
3 income, the energy assistance programs that they had
4 available. Just for one of them I think the LIHEAP --

5 JUDGE CLARK: LIHEAP.

6 MR. TRAVIS: -- yeah, the maximum income for
7 that was about 2,751. It averages out to about 33,000 a
8 year. You can go work at like fast food restaurant and
9 make that now. I'm telling you now that's not enough.
10 And I've been paying, I've been on like my own for about
11 ten years now. And the billing is -- the billing like
12 the billing pattern is inconsistent. And to piggyback
13 off of what another person just said, these fees, they
14 don't make sense, like the junk fees. And when you try
15 to go and call in to them, the representatives have like
16 absurd suggestions. They'll tell you oh, well, upgrade
17 your dishwasher. Oh, I know, because when I had a
18 dishwasher, that was eating up my bill. I'm telling
19 them like we had a winter storm last 2022 and something
20 was wrong with my heat in the apartment I was in. But
21 my bill for that month was like \$325. I told them like
22 hey, my bill, my thermostat doesn't go over 70.

23 The representative told me oh, well, usually
24 in the winter I keep my thermostat at 65. That's crazy.
25 Like I'm going to get sick.

1 JUDGE CLARK: Can I ask you a quick question?
2 When you said that their billing patterns are
3 inconsistent, what did you mean?

4 MR. TRAVIS: So what I mean, I'm referring to
5 the different billing rates like the winter versus the
6 summer like the seasons. I don't think that should be a
7 thing. Also I stay -- I own a home now. I've stayed in
8 apartments for like four or five years. And my billing,
9 like I can never get an average. Once I moved into a
10 loft downtown, my bill would range anywhere from \$100
11 all the way up to \$350. And I don't think -- I think
12 that's inconsistent.

13 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for clarifying that.
14 Thank you for your comments, Mr. Travis.

15 MR. TRAVIS: Thank you.

16 JUDGE CLARK: I have a Celine. Is there a
17 Celine present?

18 MS. FABER: Yes, I'm here.

19 JUDGE CLARK: Celine, what's your last name?

20 MS. FABER: Faber, F-a-b-e-r.

21 JUDGE CLARK: Celine, C-e-l-i-n-e?

22 MS. FABER: That's it.

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

1 MS. FABER: Yes.

2 JUDGE CLARK: Go ahead.

3 MS. FABER: All right. I want to start with
4 the fact that I am a young mother. I am very opposed to
5 this rate hike. I want to throw a few points out there
6 for the Commissioners and everybody listening to just
7 ponder on.

8 One is that there was a new Senate Bill passed
9 last year in August that exempted Ameren and other
10 utility companies from paying sales tax any more. So
11 there's a huge savings for them right there. And also a
12 huge drain on any Missouri businesses that they were
13 purchasing from. So with that, why do they need more of
14 our money.

15 It says in the -- what information they give
16 that the average customer will pay around 17.45 a month.
17 That is only going to be if your bill is around 110 a
18 month. I am very frugal with my electric usage.
19 According to my bill, I'm using 10 percent less than
20 last year, but I'm paying \$50 more than last year
21 already per month. So with that amount, I'm looking at
22 around 300 to \$400 a year just based on what I paid last
23 year in extra due to this rate increase.

24 The lady who mentioned she had been paying
25 \$500 a month for her electric, that comes out to about

1 77 extra dollars a month. A lot of people are not going
2 to be able to -- they might not be at the point where
3 they need assistance or they qualify for assistance but
4 they like me will be at the point where they will be in
5 the grocery store wondering if they can still eat
6 healthy which is, as someone else said, more expensive.

7 I am currently pregnant and trying to decide
8 if I can afford to eat healthy enough for my baby or if
9 I don't cut that, will I have to cut the very limited
10 recreational things that I'm trying to do with my
11 children like taking them out for ice cream. That costs
12 about \$17 a month if you all go out to ice cream.

13 There's been a lot of comments that Missouri's
14 energy costs are lower than average compared to the
15 other states around us. Missouri is supposed to be
16 lower than average, because they have a lower cost of
17 living and lower wages. So that all kind of goes around
18 that comes around.

19 I also want to talk about how much Ameren
20 money is being wasted. I live in a more rural area and
21 I have noticed for a very long time, and I urge other
22 people to pay attention to this too, you will find
23 Ameren crews sitting around doing nothing for hours out
24 of a day. It can be from noon on, sometimes even 10:00
25 or 11:00 on, you will find trucks just sitting. And I'm

1 not talking about during storm time. We just went
2 through Winter Storm Blair and these guys worked their
3 tails off all hours of the night. I'm talking on an
4 average day there are crews making large amounts of
5 money sitting doing nothing and they want to charge us
6 extra money every month.

7 There's also been a lot of comment on high
8 level executives making so much. I believe one of the
9 Ameren people mentioned that they are getting a small
10 increase out of this. Why do they need an increase when
11 the rest of us are living paycheck to paycheck and
12 struggling to get by. I also agree very much with what
13 people are saying on the junk fees. I just wanted to
14 throw all that out there and say they keep promising,
15 oh, we'll help people, we'll give them assistance. It's
16 not about whether or not we need assistance. It's about
17 whether or not we want to stand on our own two feet, pay
18 our bills and have a halfway decent cost of living at
19 regular middle class wages. That's all I have to say.
20 I really hope that you will consider this and not allow
21 them to raise our rates such an exorbitant amount.

22 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Faber. You make
23 a lot of points. I have a Watkins. Is there a Watkins
24 present? Again, if you're on a telephone, please dial
25 star six to unmute.

1 MS. WATKINS: Yes, hello.

2 JUDGE CLARK: Ms. Watkins?

3 MS. WATKINS: Yes. Sarah Watkins.

4 JUDGE CLARK: Would you please spell your last
5 name for the record.

6 MS. WATKINS: W-a-t-k-i-n-s.

7 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or affirm
8 that the comments you're about to give to the Commission
9 this evening are the truth?

10 MS. WATKINS: I do.

11 JUDGE CLARK: Go ahead, Ms. Watkins.

12 MS. WATKINS: Good evening, Commissioners.
13 Good evening community. My name is Sarah Watkins. I'm
14 a resident of St. Louis City. I did testify last night,
15 but I have some other points I'd like to bring to your
16 attention. But I'm here to strongly oppose Ameren
17 Missouri's proposed rate hike because it's yet another
18 example of how working people are left to bear the brunt
19 of corporate greed.

20 As I mentioned last night, I am the lead field
21 organizer for Tenants Transforming Greater St. Louis.
22 We support renters and advocate for renters' rights. So
23 what we did was actually we made outreach for these
24 hearings. We made over 300 phone calls to tenants, and
25 many of them were not aware of this proposal. But every

1 single one of them expressed deep concern about being
2 able to afford higher energy costs. I don't think the
3 public notices went out until late December or early
4 January. Please correct me if I'm wrong. But I found
5 out about this in September just because I am connected
6 to organizing spaces.

7 But I would urge Ameren to think about --
8 re-think how they're doing their outreach and spreading
9 this information. But there's a couple resources that I
10 wanted to bring to the Commission's attention. One is a
11 report that my organization put out called Home Is
12 Health. I'm sorry. It's called Home Is Where Our
13 Health Is. And it can be found at Homeishealth.org.
14 But we work to produce data that links the quality of
15 folks' housing to the quality of their health. We do
16 ask tenants if they have health issues and if they have
17 children in the home, and half of the folks that we
18 speak to that does apply to them. The housing stock we
19 do have is low, is low quality or sometimes even
20 dangerous and affordable.

21 This is important because I also want to bring
22 another resource to your attention, the Affordable
23 Housing Report Card. It talked about -- It talked about
24 residents being housing cost burdened. That's when a
25 household pays more than 30 percent of its income on

1 housing costs, utilities, taxes and fees. And so the
2 report looked at the AMI of households. So I want to
3 share some data with you just to give some context about
4 how St. Louis City and County residents are living in
5 this socioeconomic climate right now.

6 So according to the report, 50 -- folks
7 households that make 51 to 80 percent AMI. 33 percent
8 of those households are housing cost burdened. The next
9 level is 31 percent to 50 percent AMI. 68 percent of
10 those households are paying more than 30 percent of
11 their income. And then you have the lower poverty tier
12 which is zero to 30 percent AMI. 78 percent of those
13 households are housing cost burdened.

14 Then when we look at racial factors, because
15 we did link in our report in the Home Is Where Our
16 Health Report is that black people, black renters in the
17 city, this is a majority renter city, are facing the
18 most housing insecurity and also have the most health
19 issues. So black households were given an F on this
20 report card, and 44 percent of black households in St.
21 Louis City and County are housing cost burdened.

22 So with that in mind, Ameren does say that
23 they offer assistance programs, but they're not enough.
24 Too many people fall through the cracks. When Ameren
25 disconnects the power, it's the community that has to

1 step in. It's the government that has to find programs
2 and we have to figure out how to keep each other warm
3 and safe while Ameren profits when they should be paying
4 the customers for the harm that they're causing.

5 This isn't happening just in the city and the
6 county. In Missouri, rent control is preempted at the
7 state level meaning tenants are left without protections
8 against skyrocketing housing costs. Now Ameren is
9 piling on raising energy costs while thousands of
10 families are already struggling to pay rent.

11 The Public Service Commission has the power
12 and the responsibility to regulate and protect customers
13 from this kind of exploitation. You're one of the few
14 entities that can step in when corporations like Ameren
15 abuse their monopoly power to drain wealth from working
16 families. Please, I urge you to reject this rate hike.
17 Please listen to the passionate testimony of these folks
18 who came out to participate in their community and have
19 a say-so in what's happening to them. It's not just
20 about energy bills. It's about survival.

21 Ameren has shown time and time again that
22 their priority is profits, not people. So we need you
23 to stand with the tenants, stand with working families,
24 stand with the folks on fixed incomes and show that you
25 can do everything in your power. I'm sorry. Stand with

1 those people and they are doing everything they can to
2 make ends meet.

3 We need to take action to protect customers,
4 not more tools for corporate exploitation. Thank you
5 for your time. Thank you.

6 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Watkins. I
7 believe last night you talked a little bit about costs
8 versus standard of living and you informed me that
9 Ameren had disconnected 17,000 households in 2024; is
10 that correct?

11 MS. WATKINS: Yes. That was from the
12 Consumers Council of Missouri is where I got that
13 information.

14 JUDGE CLARK: Well, thank you, Ms. Watkins,
15 for your comments. Thank you very much. Is there
16 anyone else who wanted to offer comments this evening
17 but had not signed up or did not have an opportunity to
18 speak yet?

19 MR. KEIMER: Judge --

20 JUDGE CLARK: I'm sorry. Say that again,
21 please.

22 MR. KEIMER: Gerald Keimer.

23 JUDGE CLARK: Would you please spell your name
24 for the record.

25 MR. KEIMER: G-e-r-a-l-d, Keimer, K-e-i-m-e-r.

1 JUDGE CLARK: And would you raise your right
2 hand to be sworn. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that
3 the comments you are about to offer the Commission are
4 the truth?

5 MR. KEIMER: Yes, I do.

6 JUDGE CLARK: Go right ahead.

7 MR. KEIMER: I am against this rate hike not
8 necessarily for the rate hike itself but for how much it
9 is. This is a huge adjustment for everybody. I
10 understand that they need to try to repair the
11 infrastructures, but they have been trying to repair
12 these infrastructures for years and they have been doing
13 these rate hikes with that promise and yet have failed
14 to do that promise.

15 I have had two instances on my own where we've
16 had issues with Ameren's equipment that we ended up
17 having to pay for because Ameren does not pay for these
18 failures and stuff that happens to their own equipment.
19 And we have had to pay for that. And I just hope that
20 this will not go through and that everybody can take a
21 look and see what has gone on in the past and what is
22 going on current. Thank you.

23 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you. Thank you for your
24 comments. I tried to jot down people as I saw them who
25 wanted to speak. I'm just going to go down the list as

1 I have it. Nick Hall. Is there a Nick Hall present?

2 Thomas Holmes.

3 Mr. Hall, would you please spell your name for
4 the record?

5 MR. HALL: Yes. So Nick, N-i-c-k. Full name
6 is Nicholas, N-i-c-h-o-l-a-s. Last name Hall, H-a-l-l.

7 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or affirm
8 that the comments you're about to provide to the
9 Commission are the truth?

10 MR. HALL: Yes, I do. If you need me to show
11 my video, I can show you with my hand raised here.

12 JUDGE CLARK: That's not necessary. What
13 would you like to tell the Commission this evening?

14 MR. HALL: Yeah. So in 2024, my summer rate
15 was 13.7 cents per kilowatt hour, not including
16 additional fees which actually pushes it closer to 14.6
17 cents per kilowatt hour. According to Ameren's
18 calculations earlier this evening, Ameren bills its
19 customers nearly 20 percent below the Midwest national
20 average and is using that statistic as a measure in
21 which to justify its increase.

22 However, it's known that Minnesota, Michigan
23 and Wisconsin are all outliers who are calculating rates
24 for Midwest states with rates in Michigan averaging over
25 18 cents per kilowatt hour. Ameren's rates are on

1 average already higher than the average rates in
2 comparable states like Illinois and Iowa.

3 Ameren is expecting an increase to its ROE
4 from 9.71 to 10.25 percent. It's a 0.4 percent increase
5 and that is not insignificant. Given current
6 shareholder equity of \$11.8 billion, that's an increase
7 of shareholder value of \$80 million. While I have to
8 respect the responsibility of an investor-owned
9 organization to generate profit, an increase of this
10 level is simply not reasonable, especially for a utility
11 company providing a need for American families.
12 Electricity is not a luxury good.

13 According to the Missouri 211 hotline, over
14 34,000 calls were made for electricity utility
15 assistance, 7 percent of which were actually unable to
16 be helped. That's 47 percent of all utility assistance
17 calls last year. Just between March and November 2024,
18 Ameren had over 90,000 disconnections bypassing the
19 entirety of 2022 by over 10,000 households. An average
20 of 191,000 customers are in arrear at any given month
21 for an average of \$33 million and money owed to Ameren
22 from Missouri customers.

23 An increase of 15 percent of this magnitude
24 will take the many people who are not currently late on
25 payments but barely making them and push them into

1 arrears. It will undoubtedly result in an increase of
2 disconnects even more than the 90,000 households that
3 were disconnected in 2024.

4 I personally work from home, and I have a
5 chronically ill wife. Our summer bills this year hit a
6 monthly peak of \$477 and we're a single income family
7 because my wife can't work. This increase would
8 increase my monthly bill on average \$42.50, which
9 basically adds another summer month to my annual utility
10 cost plus more. A 15 percent rate increase is
11 significantly over the normal merit or salary increase
12 for the average working employee in America. For the
13 record, my own merit increase this year is expected to
14 be 3 percent.

15 **A rate increase -- this rate increase is**
16 **nearly six times the current inflation rate and almost**
17 **double the highest inflation rate of the last five years**
18 **which was 9.1 percent in June 2022. It's absolutely**
19 **devastating for those with fixed incomes. It's**
20 **devastating for those at the poverty line, even those**
21 **that fall into the average or middle class income level.**

22 **This increase guarantees that Missouri**
23 **residents earned income has less value than it did last**
24 **year. More residents will go into poverty. More**
25 **residents will lose access to electricity while**

1 shareholder value is expected to increase by \$80
2 million. Ameren reported the net profit of \$1.12
3 billion in 2023; and while 2024 profits won't officially
4 be announced until February, it's likely safe to suggest
5 that their 2024 profits will be similar if not greater.

6 The requested increase is expected to generate
7 an additional \$446 million according to the letter that
8 Ameren sent to its customers. With the utility company
9 already as profitable as it is, I really don't see -- I
10 can't imagine there's any rational explanation for a
11 rate increase of this magnitude beyond simple greed.

12 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Hall. You had
13 said that in regards to the Midwest average that once
14 you remove the outlying states that Ameren's rates are
15 not below the Midwest average; is that correct?

16 MR. HALL: Yes.

17 JUDGE CLARK: And how are you defining
18 outlying states in this regard just so I know?

19 MR. HALL: The outlying states would be
20 Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan.

21 JUDGE CLARK: Are those outlying states
22 because of their rates? I just want to know why are you
23 selecting those as outlying states.

24 MR. HALL: Yeah, so the average rates if we
25 compare North Dakota, South Dakota, Illinois, Missouri,

1 Kansas and Ohio and Iowa, those rates are all between
2 12.5 and 14.2 cents per kilowatt hour. Minnesota,
3 Wisconsin and Michigan all increase above 15. So
4 Minnesota is an average of 15. Wisconsin and Michigan
5 are closer to 17 and 18 cents per kilowatt hour.

6 JUDGE CLARK: Once you remove those three from
7 it, the average changes; is that correct?

8 MR. HALL: Correct.

9 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. All right. Mr. Hall,
10 thank you for your comments. I appreciate them.

11 MR. HALL: Absolutely. Thank you.

12 JUDGE CLARK: Thomas Holmes.

13 MR. HOLMES: Hello. Can you hear me?

14 JUDGE CLARK: I can.

15 MR. HOLMES: Fantastic.

16 JUDGE CLARK: Would you spell your name for
17 the record.

18 MR. HOLMES: Of course. T-h-o-m-a-s
19 H-o-l-m-e-s.

20 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Holmes, do you solemnly
21 swear or affirm that the comments you're about to give
22 the Commission this evening are the truth?

23 MR. HOLMES: I do.

24 JUDGE CLARK: Go ahead.

25 MR. HOLMES: Thank you. Sorry. I have a

1 little stage fright. I don't have terribly much to say,
2 but sitting in on the Q&A session before this meeting,
3 you know, I understand where Ameren is coming from. You
4 know, there are, of course, difficulties with improving
5 energy outputs, security, construction. You know, it's
6 incredibly expensive to build and maintain a power grid
7 just inherently. And I believe them when they say that,
8 you know, they're committed to providing a secure
9 consistent service to their customers. But they're
10 benefiting both from the improvement to these systems
11 along with the customer base that they're supporting.

12 You know, as they said tonight during the Q&A
13 session, their improvements are investments. Their
14 improved upgraded systems are going to provide power to
15 lower cost. They're going to be more reliable. It's
16 not going to be as expensive to maintain them. And so
17 it seems to me like they're going to recover any money
18 they spend regardless of a rate increase.

19 The question is just how long that's going to
20 take. So to me it seems like Ameren's attempting to
21 double dip profiting both from a better, cheaper, more
22 secure system, as well as the increased rates that
23 they're proposing. To me it seems like being fiscally
24 responsible, recouping their funds over a longer time
25 frame is a perfectly reasonable alternative.

1 I pitched a shorter version of this idea to
2 the representative who spoke and part of his answer
3 included the fact that rates have both increased and
4 decreased over the past, you know, few years. You know,
5 while they can go back down but that's not really a
6 guarantee.

7 To me, times being as difficult as they
8 already are, to me just doesn't seem reasonable. I'm
9 against it.

10 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Holmes, for your
11 comments.

12 MR. HOLMES: Thanks so much.

13 JUDGE CLARK: Jenn DeRose.

14 MS. DeROSE: Hello again.

15 JUDGE CLARK: I'm going to ask you to spell
16 your name again for the record, Ms. DeRose.

17 MS. DeROSE: Of course. J-e-n-n D-e-R-o-s-e.

18 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or affirm
19 that the comments you're about to offer to the
20 Commission are the truth?

21 MS. DeROSE: I do.

22 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Go ahead.

23 MS. DeROSE: Thank you so much. I apologize
24 for having to come yet again. I just did want to make a
25 clarifying statement. I support everything Sarah

1 Watkins said. She gave you some really, really great
2 information about some reports in St. Louis that are
3 really worthwhile. But there have been 90,000
4 disconnections in 2024 self-reported data from the
5 utility. So I just want to make sure that's pretty
6 clear because that's a pretty stark number. I got that
7 from a document that they're required to put that into.

8 It's also cited in a recent report that's
9 really great from the Energy and Policy Institute. I
10 don't know how to get that to you. I can put it in the
11 chat, but it cites a lot of interesting figures there
12 including that there are over 166,000 people who are
13 currently in arrears. So that's all I wanted to say.

14 JUDGE CLARK: As I said before, the chat is
15 not part of the transcript. Nothing that's in the chat
16 is going to make the transcript. Do you want to give me
17 the title of that article from Energy and Policy?

18 MS. DeROSE: Yeah, absolutely. Thank you.
19 It's called Ameren Missouri Seeks Rate Hike Amid
20 Mounting Disconnections. And I thank you.

21 JUDGE CLARK: Bear with me just a second.

22 MS. DeROSE: Of course.

23 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Thank you, Ms. DeRose,
24 for that information. Thank you for your comments.

25 MS. DeROSE: Thank you.

1 JUDGE CLARK: Now, we're a little past 9:00
2 p.m. Is there anybody else who wanted to make a comment
3 before I adjourn this hearing?

4 MS. SEAY: I would like to make a quick one if
5 there's still time.

6 JUDGE CLARK: Yes. What's your name? I just
7 see a KS.

8 MS. SEAY: Yes. My name is Kaitlyn Seay.
9 First name is K-a-i-t-l-y-n. Last name is S-e-a-y.

10 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or affirm
11 that the comments you're about to offer to the
12 Commission are the truth?

13 MS. SEAY: I do.

14 JUDGE CLARK: Please go ahead.

15 MS. SEAY: Everyone has been extremely
16 articulate tonight. So I just have a handful of
17 comments. First off, thank you so much for hearing us
18 out. We greatly appreciate your time. And then for the
19 record I am against the rate hike. I think it's already
20 been stated but Ameren consistently says they offer
21 assistance. However, it's very clear that there are
22 people not being captured by that with the significant
23 number of disconnects.

24 I think, too, I just wanted to point out that
25 it's a common negotiating tactic to create -- to make an

1 offer that is so offensive that anything lower can look
2 like a bargain at the end of day. Sorry. I'm really
3 nervous. And so yeah, I think as you're considering
4 where to go with this, yeah, 15 percent is egregious but
5 so is 10 percent, so is 5 percent. So if you could just
6 keep that in mind as you are considering your path
7 forward here.

8 And my last point here is we have no other
9 choice. It's already been stated but electricity is not
10 a luxury and we don't have another option. It's Ameren
11 or nothing. So yeah, again, thank you so much for
12 hearing us out and for giving us a chance to voice our
13 concerns. We really appreciate it.

14 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you so much. Thank you
15 for your comments tonight. I'd like to thank everybody
16 who showed up today to offer comments to the Commission.
17 If you had wanted to offer comments tonight but were
18 unable to do so or if later it occurs to you that you
19 had additional comments you wanted to offer or you're
20 talking to someone who was unable to attend the hearing
21 and they would like to offer comments, there are other
22 ways to do it. Among those other ways are contacting
23 the email address pscinfo@psc.mo.gov or by contacting
24 the Office of the Public Counsel. The Office of the
25 Public Counsel has been very gracious about seeing that

1 comments that are made through them get to the
2 Commission. Or by going to the PSC's web page and
3 you'll see a link to offer comments. If you're going to
4 offer comments either through the email address
5 pscinfo@psc.mo.gov or through the PSC web page, please
6 keep in mind that to connect your comments to the
7 correct case use the Case No. ER-2024-0319.

8 Commissioner Mitchell, would you like to make
9 any closing remarks?

10 COMMISSIONER MITCHELL: I sure would, Judge.
11 On behalf of the Commission and all of the
12 Commissioners, I'd like to thank you for attending this
13 evening and sharing your thoughts and testimony with us
14 on this matter. This is the first step in the
15 ratemaking process, and I think it's one of the most
16 important steps because it's the time that we get to
17 hear directly from the customers.

18 And I think as we move forward into the next
19 steps, it's always better for me and I think for the
20 other Commissioners to have the context of where the
21 customers stand in all of this. And so again, thank you
22 for your testimony and your feedback. It helps us
23 immensely in making the best decision that we possibly
24 can as we move forward. We do appreciate it very much.
25 Thank you.

1 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Commissioner
2 Mitchell. With that, I will adjourn this hearing and
3 we'll go off the record. Thank you everyone for your
4 participation today. Good, bad or otherwise, these
5 comments help the Commission make decisions. Thank you
6 and have a good night.

7 (WHEREUPON, the proceedings concluded at 9:07
8 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 63, 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 7th day of February, 2025.

Beverly Jean Bentch

Beverly Jean Bentch, RPR, CCR No. 640

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