Exhibit No.:

Issue(s): Noranda Ice Storm AAO/

Annualized Major Storm Cost/ Major Storm Trackers Amortization/ Annualized Vegetation Management and Infrastructure Inspection Cost/ Vegetation Management

and Infrastructure Inspection

**Trackers Amortization** 

Witness/Type of Exhibit: Robertson/Direct Sponsoring Party: Public Counsel Case No.: ER-2014-0258

#### **DIRECT TESTIMONY**

#### **OF**

#### **TED ROBERTSON**

Submitted on Behalf of the Office of the Public Counsel

#### UNION ELECTRIC D/B/A AMEREN MISSOURI

CASE NO. ER-2014-0258

\*\* **\***\*

Denotes Highly Confidential Information that has been Redacted

December 5, 2014

# BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

In the Matter of Union Electric	)	
Company d/b/a Ameren	)	Case No. ER-2014-0258
Missouri's Tariff to Increase Its	)	33331101 211 2011 3233
Revenues for Electric Service	,	

#### **AFFIDAVIT OF TED ROBERTSON**

STATE OF MISSOURI	)	
	)	SS
COUNTY OF COLE	)	

Ted Robertson, of lawful age and being first duly sworn, deposes and states:

- 1. My name is Ted Robertson. I am the Chief Public Utility Accountant for the Office of the Public Counsel.
- 2. Attached hereto and made a part hereof for all purposes is my direct testimony.
- 3. I hereby swear and affirm that my statements contained in the attached testimony are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Ted Robertson, C.P.A.

Chief Public Utility Accountant

Subscribed and sworn to me this 5<sup>th</sup> day of December 2014.

NOTARY SEAL SEAL SEAL

JERENE A. BUCKMAN My Commission Expires August 23, 2017 Cole County Commission #13754037

erene A. Buckman

Notary Public

My Commission expires August 23, 2017.

#### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Testimony	Page
Introduction	1
Purpose of Testimony	2
Noranda Ice Storm AAO	3
Annualized Major Storm Cost	14
Major Storm Trackers Amortization	16
Annualized Vegetation Management and Infrastructure Inspection Cost	22
Vegetation Management and Infrastructure Inspection Trackers Amortization	25

#### DIRECT TESTIMONY OF TED ROBERTSON

#### UNION ELECTRIC COMPANY d/b/a AMEREN MISSOURI CASE NO. ER-2014-0258

1	I.	INTRODUCTION
2	Q.	PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME AND BUSINESS ADDRESS.
3	A.	Ted Robertson, PO Box 2230, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102-2230.
4		
5	Q.	BY WHOM ARE YOU EMPLOYED AND IN WHAT CAPACITY?
6	A.	I am employed by the Missouri Office of the Public Counsel ("OPC" or "Public Counsel")
7		as the Chief Public Utility Accountant.
8		
9	Q.	WHAT IS THE NATURE OF YOUR CURRENT DUTIES AT THE OPC?
10	A.	My duties include activities associated with the supervision of the regulatory accounting,
11		financial analysis, and economic operations of the OPC. I am also responsible for
12		performing audits and examinations of the books and records of public utilities operating
13		within the state of Missouri.
14		
15	Q.	PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND OTHER
16		QUALIFICATIONS.
17	A.	I graduated in May, 1988, from Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri, with a
18		Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting. In November of 1988, I passed the Uniform

Certified Public Accountant Examination, and I obtained Certified Public Accountant ("CPA") certification from the state of Missouri in 1989. My CPA license number is 2004012798.

- Q. HAVE YOU RECEIVED SPECIALIZED TRAINING RELATED TO PUBLIC UTILITY ACCOUNTING?
- A. Yes. In addition to being employed by the Missouri Office of the Public Counsel since

  July 1990, I have attended the NARUC Annual Regulatory Studies Program at Michigan

  State University, and I have also participated in numerous training seminars relating to
  this specific area of accounting study.
- Q. HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY TESTIFIED BEFORE THE MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION ("COMMISSION" OR "MPSC")?

A. Yes, I have testified on numerous issues before this Commission. Please refer to Schedule TJR-1, attached to this direct testimony, for a listing of cases in which I have submitted testimony.

- II. PURPOSE OF TESTIMONY
- Q. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR DIRECT TESTIMONY?
- A. The purpose of my direct testimony is to address the Public Counsel's recommendations regarding the ratemaking treatment of costs associated with the accounting authority order ("AAO") Ameren Missouri ("AmerenMO" or "Ameren" or "Company") was granted in Case No. EU-2012-0027, annualized major storm costs, storm amortization expense

1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6	I	
7	(	
8	Å	
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23		
24	ll c	

related to other (Non-Noranda) storm costs deferred pursuant to Commission-ordered AAO/tracker mechanisms, annualized vegetation management and infrastructure inspection costs, and vegetation management and infrastructure inspection amortization expense related to costs deferred pursuant to Commission ordered tracker mechanisms.

III. NORANDA ICE STORM AAO

Q. WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

A. In Case No. EU-2012-0027, the Company requested and was granted authorization by the Commission for an AAO to defer what the Company has described as a reduction in the recovery of "fixed costs" due to reduced sales to Noranda Aluminum, Inc.

("Noranda") associated with an ice storm that occurred in Southeast Missouri on or about January 27, 2009. On page one (1) of the Report and Order, effective December 26, 2013, the Commission stated:

The Missouri Public Service Commission is granting the application for an accounting authority order ("AAO"). The AAO accounts for unexpected lost revenue to recover fixed costs. The AAO only allows for deferred recording, does not guarantee recovery, and does not in any way bind the Commission as to future rate making treatment.

(Emphasis added by OPC)

- Q. WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OF THE ISSUE?
- A. Beginning on page 123.11 of the Company's Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ("FERC") Form 1 for calendar year 2013 4th quarter it states:

2

4 5

6

7

8

### Direct Testimony of Ted Robertson Case No. ER-2014-0258

#### Missouri

#### **FAC Prudence Review**

In April 2011, the MoPSC issued an order with respect to its review of Ameren Missouri's FAC for the period from March 1, 2009, to September 30, 2009. In this order, the MoPSC ruled that Ameren Missouri should have included in the FAC calculation all revenues and costs associated with certain long-term partial requirements sales that were made by Ameren Missouri because of the loss of Noranda's load caused by a severe ice storm in January 2009. As a result of the order, Ameren Missouri recorded a pretax charge to earnings of \$18 million, including \$1 million for interest, in 2011 for its obligation to refund to its electric customers the earnings associated with these sales previously recognized by Ameren Missouri during the period from March 1, 2009, to September 30, 2009. In May 2012, upon appeal by Ameren Missouri, the Cole County Circuit Court reversed the MoPSC's April 2011 order. In June 2012, the MoPSC and a group of large industrial customers filed an appeal of the Cole County Circuit Court's ruling to the Missouri Court of Appeals, Western District. In May 2013, the Missouri Court of Appeals upheld the MoPSC's April 2011 order and reversed the Cole County Circuit Court's May 2012 decision.

Ameren Missouri's FAC calculation for the period from October 1, 2009. to May 31, 2011, excluded all revenues and costs associated with certain long-term partial requirements sales that were made by Ameren Missouri because of the loss of Noranda's load caused by a severe ice storm in January 2009, similar to the FAC calculation for the period from March 1, 2009, to September 30, 2009. The MoPSC issued an order in July 2013, which was similar to the MoPSC's April 2011 order, as a result of which Ameren Missouri recorded a pretax charge to earnings of \$26 million, including \$1 million for interest, in 2013 for its estimated obligation to refund to Ameren Missouri's electric customers the earnings associated with these sales previously recognized by Ameren Missouri for the period from October 1, 2009, to May 31, 2011. Ameren Missouri recorded the charge to "Operating Revenues - Electric" and the related interest to "Interest Charges" with a corresponding offset to "Current regulatory liabilities." No similar revenues were excluded from FAC calculations after May 2011.

Separately, in July 2011, Ameren Missouri filed a request with the MoPSC for an accounting authority order that would allow Ameren Missouri to defer fixed costs totaling \$36 million that were not previously recovered from Noranda as a result of the loss of load caused by the severe 2009 ice storm for potential recovery in a future electric rate case.

In November 2013, the MoPSC issued an order approving Ameren Missouri's request for an accounting authority order. Ameren Missouri will seek to recover these fixed costs in its next electric rate case. In February 2014, MIEC filed an appeal of the accounting authority order to the Missouri Court of Appeals, Western District.

- Q. WHAT IS THE AMOUNT THAT THE COMMISSION AUTHORIZED FOR DEFERRAL?
- A. On page two (2) of the Report and Order, the Commission stated:
  - 3. In January 2008, an ice storm struck southeast Missouri, cutting power to Ameren's largest customer Noranda Aluminum, damaging Noranda's operations, and reducing Noranda's purchases of electricity for 14 months. As a result, Ameren collected less revenue than expected from Noranda. The amount of unrecovered fixed costs attributable to serving Noranda during those 14 months is \$35,561,503.12
  - 4. The \$35,561,503 of unrecovered fixed costs attributed to serving Noranda represented nearly 8.5% of the Company's net income in 2009.

Note: The quote from the Report and Order states that the ice storm occurred in January 2008, but the actual date was on or about January 27, 2009.

- Q. DID THE COMPANY DEFER THE AMOUNT IDENTIFIED ABOVE AS AUTHORIZED?
- A. Yes; however, the Company immediately zeroed-out the entry. Page 232.1 of
  Company's 2013 4th quarter FERC Form 1 shows that the FERC Uniform System of
  Accounts ("USOA") Account 182.3 Other Regulatory Assets was debited \$35,561,503.

  It also shows that an equal amount was credited to USOA Account 407 Regulatory
  Credits. The footnote data for the entry states:

records.

Established per Missouri Public Service Commission Case EU-2012-0027

In November 2013, the MoPSC issued an order approving Ameren Missouri's request for an Accounting Authority Order to defer fixed costs that were not previously recovered from Noranda as a result of the loss of load caused by a severe 2009 ice storm for potential recovery in a future electric rate case. As a result of the order, Ameren Missouri recorded a regulatory asset and a reserve for the amount of the order. Ameren Missouri will seek recovery in the next electric rate case.

However, my review of the Company's general ledger for calendar year 2013 identified that while the Company did record an entry to debit (i.e., defer) the \$35,561,503 to USOA Account 182.3 (i.e., 182.395) - EU-2012-0027 AAO, as authorized by the Commission, it immediately offset the entry by crediting an equal amount to USOA Account 182.3 (i.e., 182.39C) - EU-2012-0027 AAO Contra which was not authorized by the Commission. Combined, the two entries sum to zero in the Company's financial

The above information is corroborated by the Company's response to MPSC Staff Data Request No. 425 which identifies all accounting entries utilized to book the costs:

Entry to record the asset for regulatory purposes: November 2013 182-395 Regulatory Asset – EU-2012-0027 AAO \$35,561,503 407-495 Regulatory Credit – EU-2012-0027 AAO Offset (\$35,561,503)

27

Entry to record contra asset (See MPSC 0166 for additional information) November 2013 407-495 Regulatory Credit – EU-2012-0027 AAO Offset \$35,561,503

31 32 33 182-39C Regulatory Asset – EU-2012-0027 AAO Contra (\$35,561,503)

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10 11 12 13 14 15 16	
17	
18	
19	
20	
21	
22 23 24 25 26 27 28	

The effect of the Company's accounting entries is that it booked the asset and expense reduction, as authorized, but then added additional entries that effectively zero-out the amounts booked.

- Q. WHY WAS USOA ACCOUNT 407.4 REGULATORY CREDITS UTILIZED TO BOOK THE EXPENSE ENTRIES?
- A. The account was utilized to follow FERC USOA requirements. The USOA description for utilization of Account 407.4 Regulatory Credits is as follows:

This account shall be credited, when appropriate, with the amounts debited to Account 182.3, Other Regulatory Assets, to establish regulatory assets. This account shall also be credited, when appropriate, with the amounts debited to Account 254, Other Regulatory Liabilities, concurrent with the return of such amounts to customers through rates.

- Q. WHY DID THE COMPANY ZERO-OUT THE CREATION OF THE ASSET AUTHORIZED BY THE COMMISSION?
- A. The highly confidential portion of the Company's response to MPSC Staff DR No. 166 states:

\*\*

Q. DOES PUBLIC COUNSEL OPPOSE ANY RECOVERY FROM RATEPAYERS OF THE

AAO COSTS DEFERRED BY THE COMPANY PURSUANT TO CASE NO. EU-20120027?

- A. Yes. Public Counsel recommends that the Commission deny any Company request to recover the "costs" deferred on the grounds that what the Company deferred is not incremental costs associated with damage from the ice storm, but is instead additional revenues it may have earned had the storm not occurred. In addition, I believe, based on the counsel of my attorney, that Commission authorization for the Company to recover the costs deferred in future rates would constitute retroactive ratemaking. In other words, if any Company recovery from ratepayers of the amount deferred is authorized, future customers would be paying higher rates to compensate the Company for a prior reduction in its earned rate of return for financial reporting years which closed long ago.
- Q. DID THE NORANDA SALES REDUCTION ACTUALLY RESULT IN COMPANY INCURRING ANY LOST FIXED COSTS?
- A. No. While I will not go into the complete record of Case No. EU-2012-0027, the deferred amount represents additional revenues the Company did not earn during the period that Noranda was operating in a reduced capacity. For example, beginning on page 12, line



16, of the Case No. EU-2012-0027 rebuttal testimony of MPSC Staff witness, Mr. Mark
L. Oligschlaeger, he clearly demonstrates that the Company fully recovered all its
expenses and interest costs along with a portion of its authorized return on equity (i.e.
profit) during the period that the reduction in sales to Noranda occurred. The Company's
recovery of any of the amount deferred pursuant to Case No. EU-2012-0027 would allow
it to garner additional profits (i.e., more return on equity) it did not achieve in calendar
years 2009 and 2010.

Q. IS COMMISSION AUTHORIZATION OF A SPECIFIC REVENUE REQUIREMENT OR
RETURN ON EQUITY FOR A REGULATED UTILITY A GUARANTEE FOR
RECOVERY OF THE AMOUNT?

just and reasonable rates at a level that will provide the utility with a reasonable

No. Regulatory ratemaking principles state that the Commission is responsible for fixing

opportunity to recover prudently incurred operating costs, depreciation, taxes and a fair

rate of return on the original cost of plant facilities and other assets required to provide

opportunity but not a guarantee to earn the amount. It is up to the utility's management

to operate the organization so as to achieve the authorized revenue requirement and

and maintain service. The Commission's authorization provides the utility with the

A.

return on equity.

Q. IS THERE ANY PRECEDENT IN MISSOURI FOR DEFERRAL AND RECOVERY OF "LOST REVENUES" SUCH AS THOSE DEFERRED PURSUANT TO CASE NO. EU-2012-0027?

- A. No. On page three (3) of the Commission's Report and Order in Case No. EU-2012-0027 it cited similar "circumstances" of lost revenue deferrals to substantiate its decision to authorize the deferral requested in the case. The Report and Order states:
  - 3. Revenue not collected by a utility to recover its fixed costs, under some circumstances, is an "item" that may be deferred and considered for later rate making. This is consistent with Commission regulations regarding certain energy conservation programs which specify that lost revenue may constitute an item for recording. It is also analogous to the Cold Weather Rule, created by the Commission under its statutory authority, which expressly allowed for recovery of lost revenues. Such a deferral under this rule does not constitute illegal retro-active ratemaking because there is no rate being set for it is merely an accounting deferral.

Public Counsel believes that the "circumstances" (i.e. energy conservation programs and Cold Weather Rule) utilized as support by the Commission for its decision in EU-2012-0027 are distinguished from the current circumstance in that they have a basis in law, whereas no similar law or rule exists to authorize deferral of storm-related lost revenues. In fact, Missouri law does not require that rates yield any particular return (*State ex rel. Capital City Water Co. v. Pub. Serv. Comm'n of Missouri*, 298 Mo. 524, 252 S.W. 446, 456 (Mo. banc 1922); *State ex rel. Missouri Gas Energy v. Pub. Serv. Comm'n*, 186 S.W.3d 376, 383 (Mo. Ct. App. 2005)).

Furthermore, in a recent case, Southern Union Company (of which Missouri Gas Energy ("MGE") is a division), Case No. GU-2011-0392, the Commission rejected a request for an AAO by MGE seeking to defer "lost revenues" caused by a catastrophic tornado in

Joplin, MO (i.e., On May 22, 2011, a tornado, rated by the National Weather Service as EF-5, struck Joplin, Missouri and MGE's service area). MGE's request was premised upon the reduction in sales from customers that could not take any service from that company due to damage or destruction caused by the tornado. However, beginning on page twenty-five (25) of the Final Decision Granting In Part, and Denying In Part, Accounting Authority Order the Commission states:

The Company's claim is different. Ungenerated revenue never has existed, never does exist, and never will exist. Revenue not generated, from service not provided, represents no exchange of value. There is neither revenue nor cost to record, in the current period nor in any other. The Company showed no instance when service not provided resulted in recording any revenue or cost, lost or generated, on a deferred or current basis. That is because the Company cannot have an item of profit or loss when it provides no service, whether the cause of no service is ordinary or extraordinary. Services not provided and revenues not generated are mere expectancies, are things that simply did not happen, and are not items at all.

#### C. Summary as to Ungenerated Revenue

An AAO only determines the period for recording an item but the Company seeks an AAO to create the item itself by layering fiction upon fiction. To issue an AAO for ungenerated revenue would create a phantom loss, and an unearned windfall, for the Company. Therefore, the Commission will deny the AAO as to ungenerated revenue.

The decision in the MGE AAO case was reiterated in Empire District Electric Company Case No. ER-2012-0345. On page thirteen (13) of the Commission Report and Order Regarding Interim Rates, Dated October 31, 2012, it states:

6

10

11

12 13

14

15 16

17

18

19

20

21 22

23

24

25

"Services not provided and revenues not generated are mere expectancies" and cannot be deferred under an accounting authority order.

- Q. HOW MIGHT THESE PRIOR COMMISSION DECISIONS INFORM THE ACCOUNTING TREATMENT OF THE AAO HERE?
- A. Public Counsel believes that the Commission should recognize that "un-generated revenue" never has existed, never does exist, and never will exist, and so should not be included in the determination and development of future rates collected from Ameren's ratepayers. Public Counsel also believes that if the Commission were to authorize recovery of the deferred amount in rates, the decision would violate the regulatory ratemaking principles and processes against allowing retroactive ratemaking.
- WHAT IS "RETROACTIVE RATEMAKING?" Q.
- Α. My understanding of retroactive ratemaking is that it is the setting of rates in order for a utility to recover the specific financial impacts of past events incurred by the utility so as to make the utility's shareholders "whole" for the utility's past financial under-recovery or, conversely, make the utility's customers "whole" for the utility's past financial overrecovery.
- Q. PLEASE SUMMARIZE PUBLIC COUNSEL'S POSITION ON THIS ISSUE.
- Public Counsel recommends that the Commission not authorize the Company to include Α. in the development of rates charged ratepayers, in the current or any future case, any of the costs it deferred pursuant to the AAO granted in Case No. EU-2012-0027. The

amount deferred represents nothing more than lost un-generated revenues. Authorizing recovery of the lost revenues from ratepayers would constitute a violation of the retroactive ratemaking principle.

#### IV. ANNUALIZED MAJOR STORM COST

- Q. WHAT IS THE BASE AMOUNT OF NON-LABOR OPERATION & MAINTENANCE ("O&M") STORM COST THAT YOU RECOMMEND BE INCLUDED IN THIS CASE?
- A. I recommend that the base amount of non-labor O&M major storm cost allowed in this case be \$5,877,818. This amount represents an eighty-four (84) month average of major storm costs booked by Ameren from April 2007 through March 2014. I used the 84 month average because it is my understanding that that is the entire period of time since the costs of major storms have been accumulated for purposes of determining a normalized level of expense. In addition, the use of the longer timeframe better illustrates the actual incurrence of the costs by the utility over a seven (7) year period. The use of the longer time period also permits a smoothing of the cost recovery by the utility since there appears to be no trend, either up or down, in the incurrence of the actual costs. That is, for any given year the actual costs incurred vary significantly from prior and later years.
- Q. WHAT IS THE ACTUAL TEST YEAR LEVEL OF NON-LABOR O&M STORM COST RECORDED BY THE COMPANY?

- A. My review of Company work paper LMM-WP-501 and the Company's response to MPSC Staff DR No. 118 identified that the actual test year level of non-labor O&M major storm cost booked was \$5,667,362.
- Q. IS PUBLIC COUNSEL'S RECOMMENDATION AN INCREASE OVER WHAT THE UTILITY ACTUALLY INCURRED DURING THE TEST YEAR?
- A. Yes. Public Counsel's recommended annualization of the cost results in a \$210,456 (i.e., \$5,877,818 minus \$5,667,362) increase above actual test year cost.
- Q. HOW DOES PUBLIC COUNSEL'S RECOMMENDATION COMPARE TO THE BASE

  LEVEL OF NON-LABOR O&M STORM COST INCLUDED IN THE COMPANY'S PRIOR

  RATE CASE?
- A. The base level of major storm cost authorized in the Company's prior rate case, Case

  No. ER-2012-0166, was \$6,800,000 (Report and Order, p. 99). Thus, Public Counsel's

  recommendation results in slightly more than a \$900,000 reduction in the annual level of
  cost built into Company's current rates.
- Q. IS THE ANNUALIZED COST AMOUNT RECOMMENDED BY PUBLIC COUNSEL SUBJECT TO CHANGE?
- A. Yes. The end of the true-up period for this case is December 31, 2014. As new monthly cost data arrives I will update my recommendation. Further, it is my understanding that the Company has changed it methodology for recognizing and booking major storm costs since its last general rate increase case. Public Counsel intends to follow-up on

23

1 this matter in order to determine if the methodology change impacts the Public Counsel's 2 recommendation. 3 4 ٧. MAJOR STORM TRACKERS AMORTIZATION 5 Q. WHAT IS THE ISSUE? 6 Α. The issue concerns the ratemaking for major storm costs that the Commission has 7 previously authorized the Company to defer. The Company has been booking to 8 expense the amortization of four (4) separate Commission authorized deferrals of storm 9 cost and has been recording the deferral of storm cost associated with a fifth as 10 authorized in its last general rate increase case. The deferrals are listed in the 11 Company's 2013 FERC Form 1 as: 12 13 1. Electric 2006 Rate Case Storm Costs 14 2. 2007 Storm AAO Costs 15 Electric 2008 Rate Case Storm Costs 3. 16 4. Electric 2009 Rate Case Storm Costs 17 5. Storm Tracker 2013 18 19 WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE DEFERRED AMOUNTS? Q. 20 Α. The 2006, 2007 and 2008 deferred asset balances will be fully amortized to expense as 21 of the end of the current case true-up date, December 31, 2014. The 2009 deferred 22 asset balance will be fully-amortized by the end of June 2015. However, the 2013

tracker deferral, authorized in ER-2012-0166, currently has a liability balance

19

20

21

22

23

A.

(\$2,508,250) as of March 31, 2014. The recording of the liability balance means that the Company has and will collect more in base rates than the actual costs that are occurring. Absent any major storm events between now and the effective date of new rates in the current case, the 2013 tracker liability balance is expected to grow to a significant amount. Furthermore, pursuant to the Commission authorization of the two-way tracker in Case No. ER-2012-0166 (Report and Order, p. 97) the over-payments will be flowed back to ratepayers.

- Q. WHAT IS PUBLIC COUNSEL'S RECOMMENDATION REGARDING THE RECOVERY OF MAJOR STORM COSTS DEFERRED PURSUANT TO PRIOR COMMISSION ORDERS?
  - Public Counsel's recommendation is twofold. First, it is Public Counsel's recommendation that the over-recoveries be returned to customers. The 2006, 2007, and 2008 deferrals will be fully recovered by the utility by the end of calendar year 2014, but the amortization expense associated with those deferrals remains included in current rates until the effective date of the current case rate change. Public Counsel recommends that the over-recovered amount associated with those deferrals be returned to ratepayers via an offset to amortization expense as soon as possible. Further, the 2009 deferral will be fully recovered by the utility by the end of June 2015, thus leaving only one month's amortization to be recovered after the operation of law date of this rate case. Public Counsel recommends that the one month's amortization be combined, or netted, with the over-recoveries described above to derive the annual amount to be returned to ratepayers. Lastly, the 2013 deferral has a large liability

balance which is likely to continue to increase through and including May 31, 2015. This liability balance should also be netted with the described over-recoveries and returned to ratepayers. Second, it is Public Counsel's recommendation that the Commission cease to authorize any new major storm trackers for the Company.

- Q. WHAT IS THE TOTAL EXPECTED OVER-RECOVERED AMOUNT AT MAY 31, 2015?
- A. Based on my review of the Company's general ledger and Company's response to MEIC Data Request No. 5.1, I believe that the net over-recovered amount will total (\$5,709,251).

Q. OVER WHAT TIME PERIOD DOES PUBLIC COUNSEL RECOMMEND THE OVER-RECOVERED AMOUNT BE RETURNED TO RATEPAYERS?

Α.

Based on a review of recent rate changes for the Company, I recommend that the amount be returned to ratepayers over two (2) years. The average period of time before a change in tariff effective dates for the Company's last five general rate increase cases (i.e., ER-2007-0002, ER-2008-0318, ER-2010-0036, ER-2011-0028, and ER-2012-0166) was approximately sixteen (16) months or 1.34 years. Thus, I believe that a two year time period represents a reasonable amount of time in which to return the ratepayers' own monies back to them. It would also help to mitigate intergenerational inequities that will occur if a longer timeframe is chosen. Spread over two years the reduction in the liability balance is (\$2,854,626) annually.

- Q. WHAT IS THE TOTAL ACTUAL TEST YEAR LEVEL OF AMORTIZATION EXPENSE THE COMPANY BOOKED FOR THE FIVE TRACKERS?
- A. My review of the Company's general ledger identifies the total actual test year amortization expense booked to USOA Account 407 as \$6,847,181.
- Q. IS PUBLIC COUNSEL'S RECOMMENDATION A DECREASE IN AMORTIZATION

  EXPENSE OVER WHAT THE UTILITY ACTUALLY INCURRED DURING THE TEST

  YEAR?
- A. Yes. Because Public Counsel's recommendation includes costs through the operation of law date of the case, May 31, 2015, it picks up the over-recovery of costs included in current rates for the 2006, 2007, and 2008 trackers, and it recognizes that the only expense recovery remaining owed to the utility is one month of expense for the 2009 tracker. The 2013 tracker has a large liability balance that in combination with the 2006, 2007 and 2008 tracker over-recovery and 2009 tracker under-recovery results in a total net liability balance of (\$5,709,251) owed to ratepayers. Spread over two years the liability amount is (\$2,854,626) and the nominal difference between that amount and the actual booked test year amortization expense of \$6,847,181 results in a decrease of (\$9,701,806) to the amortization cost booked in USOA Account 407.
- Q. IS THE ANNUALIZED AMORTIZATION COST AMOUNT RECOMMENDED BY PUBLIC COUNSEL SUBJECT TO CHANGE?
- A. Yes. The cost information for the 2013 tracker available to Public Counsel currently extends only to August 2014 so that information will need to be updated. Further, the

end of the true-up period for this case is December 31, 2014. As new monthly cost data arrives I will update the analysis and my recommendation in later testimony.

- Q. IS IT ALSO PUBLIC COUNSEL'S RECOMMENDATION THAT NO NEW MAJOR STORM COSTS TRACKER BE AUTHORIZED IN THE CURRENT CASE?
- A. Yes. In Case No. ER-2012-0166 (Report and Order, p. 96 & 97) the Commission rationalized and authorized the continued use of major storm cost trackers as follows:
  - 14. In the past, the Commission has allowed Ameren Missouri to recover all its major storm costs through a series of AAOs. The creation of a two-way tracker will simply rationalize that method of recovery without reducing Ameren Missouri's incentive to control costs. It will not increase the burden of prudence review imposed on Staff and other parties. However, because it tracks major storm restoration costs both above and below the amount set in base rates, the tracker will return such costs to ratepayers if Ameren Missouri's service territory is not hit by a major storm. The Commission finds that a two way tracker is appropriate in these circumstances and will approve the tracker proposed by Ameren Missouri.

Trackers, if properly and judiciously used, can be a useful ratemaking tool in the regulator's toolbox, but a tracker is not a surrogate for cost of service ratemaking. Proper use of a tracker can occur in relatively temporary situations where the development of an annualization for new costs which are expected to recur annually is not possible because historical data upon which to rely does not exist, or because of legislative actions such as changes in the law or rulemaking of governing regulatory bodies. However, once a reasonable historical record for

the costs becomes available to develop an annualization of the costs, the use of the tracker should cease.

As utilized by this Commission, for this issue, the tracker mechanism has supplanted cost of service ratemaking. Further, I believe that the Commission's premise that the Company's incentive to control costs is not impacted with the use of a tracker is incorrect. In fact, I believe that exactly the opposite is true. Cost of service ratemaking, not the use of trackers, is what provides monopoly utilities with the incentive to control costs. The use of trackers deprives monopoly utilities of any incentive to drive down costs.

- Q. PLEASE EXPLAIN PUBLIC COUNSEL'S CONCERN WITH THE

  COMMISSION'S PREMISE THAT THE BURDEN OF PRUDENCE REVIEW

  IMPOSED ON STAFF AND OTHER PARTIES IS NOT INCREASED.
- A. That premise is incorrect as it relates to the MPSC Staff and especially other parties such as the Public Counsel. The amount of resources (i.e., personnel and time) available to both the MPSC Staff and other parties to conduct a thorough prudence review within the context of an AAO request compared to a full-blown general rate increase is vastly different.

In general, a rate increase case audit reviews all aspects of the entire cost structure of the utility seeking the increase. This is important because Ameren is an extremely large utility and its cost structure includes a great variety of complex

costs and issues which require significant resources of both personnel and time in order to perform a proper audit. Whereas, the prudence review of costs deferred pursuant to an AAO may only require one or two personnel and a significant amount of time to complete the analysis. On a stand alone basis, the AAO prudence review is often a complex, but manageable activity that is not necessarily limited by the timeframes required for performing a general rate increase audit. However, when layered on with the other audit requirements of a general rate increase case the complexity, requirement for resources, and additional burden of the AAO analysis adds a significant amount of work to be performed within a limited timeframe.

11

12

13

14

15

16

In fact, I do not offer the above to criticize any party, but to impress upon the Commission that a prudence review of alleged costs within an AAO request is a far different animal than a prudence review of the same costs within the context of a general rate increase case when other, many more numerous, costs and issues require as much or more attention of the auditors.

17

18

19

VI. ANNUALIZED VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE INSPECTION COSTS

WHAT IS THE BASE AMOUNT OF OF NON-LABOR OPERATION & MAINTENANCE

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE INSPECTION COST THAT

20 21

22

Q.

YOU RECOMMEND BE INCLUDED IN THIS CASE?

- A. I recommend that the base amount of non-labor O&M vegetation management and infrastructure inspection costs authorized in the development of rates, in the current case, be \$52,422,026 and \$5,648,808, respectively.
- Q. HOW DID YOU DETERMINE YOUR RECOMMENDED ANNUALIZED AMOUNT FOR VEGETATION MANAGEMENT COST?
- A. The vegetation management amount represents a sixty-two (62) month average of vegetation management costs booked by Ameren from February 2009 through March 2014. I used the 62 month average because it is my understanding that that is the entire period of time that the expenses for vegetation management have been booked per the authorized trackers mechanism, thus the time period represents the most reasonable "population" of data for the purpose of determining an annualized level of expense on a going forward basis. In addition, since the costs booked do not show any trend that they are either increasing or decreasing on an annual basis (i.e. the costs have fluctuated both up and down during the 62 month period), the use of the longer time period permits a smoothing of the costs to be recovered by the utility.
- Q. HOW DID YOU DETERMINE YOUR RECOMMENDED ANNUALIZED AMOUNT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE INSPECTION COST?
- A. Public Counsel's recommendation for the annualized infrastructure inspections cost is based on a two (2) year average of expenses booked during the twelve months ended March 2013 and March 2014. While expenses for vegetation management activities did not show any discernible trending of costs incurred, the exact opposite is true for

infrastructure inspection costs. Beginning with the first full year of expenses booked on a twelve-month ended March basis, these costs have shown a steady and significant decrease. Only when one reviews the expenses booked as of the twelve months ended March 2014 do the expenses increase from a prior year and then only to a level nowhere as significant as the annual costs incurred in years prior to March 2013. It appears to Public Counsel that the costs for this program have reached a plateau or level that can be reasonably utilized to develop an annualized amount on a going forward basis.

- Q. WHAT IS THE ACTUAL TEST YEAR AMOUNT OF NON-LABOR O&M VEGETATION
  MANAGEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE INSPECTION COST RECORDED BY THE
  COMPANY?
- A. My review of Company work paper LMM-WP-425, LMM-WP-501, and the Company's response to MPSC Staff DR No. 221 identified that the actual test year amount of non-labor O&M vegetation management and infrastructure inspection cost booked was \$56,289,626 and \$5,924,356, respectively.

- Q. IS PUBLIC COUNSEL'S RECOMMENDATION A DECREASE FROM WHAT THE UTILITY ACTUALLY EXPENSED DURING THE TEST YEAR?
- A. Yes. Public Counsel's recommended annualization of the costs results in a (\$3,867,600) decrease for vegetation management and a (\$275,549) decrease for infrastructure inspection from the actual test year expense booked.

inspection costs and has also been booking the deferral of vegetation management and

22

1 infrastructure inspection costs associated with the tracker authorized in Case No. ER-2 2012-0166. The deferrals are listed in the Company's general ledger and its response to 3 MIEC Data Request No. 5.1 as: 4 5 1. 182356 Vegetation & Infrastructure Reliability Tracker – March 2011 6 2. 182357 Vegetation & Infrastructure Reliability Tracker – August 2012 7 3. 254357 Vegetation & Infrastructure Reliability Tracker Aug 12 8 4. 254410 Vegetation & Infrastructure Reliability Tracker Jul 10 – Feb 11 9 10 The balances in accounts 182356 and 254410 are being amortized to the expense 11 account 407 and it appears that the costs associated with the tracker authorized in ER-12 2012-0166 are being booked in accounts 182357 and 254357. 13 WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE DEFERRED AMOUNTS? 14 Q. 15 A. The balances as of test year end, March 31, 2014, are: 16 17 1. 182356 940,235 18 2. 182357 0 19 3. 254357 (\$2,236,173) 20 4. (\$ 462,866) 254410 21 Total (\$2,145,805)

The recording of the liability balance means that the Company has and will collect more in base rates than the actual costs that are occurring. Furthermore, pursuant to the Commission authorization of the two-way tracker in Case No. ER-2012-0166 (Report and Order, p. 97) the over-payments will be flowed back to ratepayers.

Q. WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED BALANCES AS OF THE OPERATION OF LAW DATE OF THE CURRENT CASE?

A. The balances as of May 31, 2015, are estimated to be:

1. 182356 \$313,591

2. 182357 \$323,749

3. 254357 \$ 0

4. 254410 (\$154,289)

Total \$483,051

Q. WHAT IS PUBLIC COUNSEL'S RECOMMENDATION REGARDING THE RECOVERY
OF VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE INSPECTION COSTS
DEFERRED PURSUANT TO PRIOR COMMISSION ORDERS?

A. Public Counsel's recommendation is essentially the same as that recommended for the major storm trackers. First, it is the Public Counsel's recommendation that the over or under recovered balances that exist as of May 31, 2015 be determined and included in the development of rates in the current case as an amortization to expense over two (2) years. Based on the cost data known at this time, the under recovered balance will

approximate \$483,051. Spread over 2 years the annualized amortization would be \$241,526. Second, Public Counsel recommends that the Commission cease to authorize any new vegetation management and infrastructure inspection trackers for the Company.

- Q. WHAT IS THE TOTAL ACTUAL TEST YEAR LEVEL OF AMORTIZATION EXPENSE THE COMPANY BOOKED FOR THE TRACKERS?
- A. My review of the Company's general ledger identifies the total actual test year amortization expense booked to USOA Account 407 as \$272,628.
- Q. DOES PUBLIC COUNSEL'S RECOMMENDATION RESULT IN A DECREASE IN

  AMORTIZATION EXPENSE OVER WHAT THE UTILITY ACTUALLY INCURRED

  DURING THE TEST YEAR?
- A. Yes. Because Public Counsel's recommendation includes known costs through the operation of law date of the case, May 31, 2015, it recognizes the continued amortization to expense of tracker costs included in current rates along with tracker costs not yet included in rates. The net result is a decrease of (\$31,102) to the actual test year amortization expense.
- Q. IS THE ANNUALIZED AMORTIZATION EXPENSE RECOMMENDED BY PUBLIC COUNSEL SUBJECT TO CHANGE?
- A. Yes. The end of the true-up period for this case is December 31, 2014. As new monthly cost data arrives I will update the analysis and my recommendation in later testimony as

appropriate. Further, the cost information available to Public Counsel for the tracker authorized in Case No. ER-2012-0166 currently extends only to August 2014 so that information will also need to be updated as the case progresses.

- Q. IS IT ALSO PUBLIC COUNSEL'S RECOMMENDATION THAT NO NEW VEGETATION

  MANAGEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE INSPECTION COSTS TRACKER BE

  AUTHORIZED IN THE CURRENT CASE?
- A. Yes. In Case No. ER-2012-0166 (Report and Order, p. 102 &103) the Commission recognized that the vegetation management and infrastructure rules which became effective in June 2008 would lead to increased compliance costs for utilities. Since the rules were new and the ultimate costs to comply were unknown, the Commission authorized a series of trackers in order to assist the utility to recover the costs it incurred. However, the tracker mechanism was never meant to be permanent. The Commission stated this fact in Ameren's last rate case (Report and Order, p. 107):

However, as the Commission has indicated in previous rate cases, it does not intend for this tracker to become permanent.

- Q. WHY DID THE COMMISSION CONTINUE THE TRACKER FOR THE COMPANY IN CASE NO. ER-2012-0166?
- A. The Commission based its decision on the fact that even though the rules have been in effect since 2008 and the Company now has more experience in

4

6

8

9

17

14

20

A.

25

complying with the rules, it still had not completed a single cycle on inspections for its rural circuits (Report and Order, p. 106 and 107).

- Q. WHEN WAS THE COMPANY SCHEDULED TO HAVE COMPLETED THE CYCLE OF INSPECTIONS FOR ITS RURAL CIRCUITS?
- A. According to the Commission in ER-2012-0166 (Report and Order, p. 104) the work in question should have been completed in December 31, 2013:

Ameren Missouri has now been operating under the Commission's vegetation management and infrastructure inspection rules for nearly five years. Ameren Missouri has completed its first four-year cycle for vegetation management work on urban circuits under the requirements of the new rules, however, it will not complete the first six-year cycle of work on rural circuits until December 31, 2013.

- Q. DO THE ANNUAL COSTS THE COMPANY IS CURRENTLY INCURRING INDICATE THAT THE PROGRAMS HAVE STABLIZED?
  - Yes. The annual costs for compliance for the vegetation management activities are fluctuating up and down as is normal with many costs under the control of the utility's management, while those of the infrastructure inspection program have dropped significantly. Public Counsel now believes both the Company and the Commission should recognize that as of the operation of law date of the current case there will be nearly seven (7) years of experience upon which the Company can rely for the setting of a base level of costs in rates, thus eliminating the need for the continued use of the tracker mechanism. The tracker mechanism was

never meant to be permanent and its continued use instead of proper historical
cost of service regulatory ratemaking merely continues to inappropriately protect
the Company from the effects of competition which cost of service regulatory
ratemaking provides.

5

6

- Q. DOES THIS CONCLUDE YOUR DIRECT TESTIMONY?
- A. Yes.

# CASE PARTICIPATION OF TED ROBERTSON

Company Name	Case No.
Missouri Public Service Company	GR-90-198
United Telephone Company of Missouri	TR-90-273
Choctaw Telephone Company	TR-91-86
Missouri Cities Water Company	WR-91-172
United Cities Gas Company	GR-91-249
St. Louis County Water Company	WR-91-361
Missouri Cities Water Company	WR-92-207
Imperial Utility Corporation	SR-92-290
Expanded Calling Scopes	TO-92-306
United Cities Gas Company	GR-93-47
Missouri Public Service Company	GR-93-172
Southwestern Bell Telephone Company	TO-93-192
Missouri-American Water Company	WR-93-212
Southwestern Bell Telephone Company	TC-93-224
Imperial Utility Corporation	SR-94-16
St. Joseph Light & Power Company	ER-94-163
Raytown Water Company	WR-94-211
Capital City Water Company	WR-94-297
Raytown Water Company	WR-94-300
St. Louis County Water Company	WR-95-145
United Cities Gas Company	GR-95-160
Missouri-American Water Company	WR-95-205
Laclede Gas Company	GR-96-193
Imperial Utility Corporation	SC-96-427
Missouri Gas Energy	GR-96-285
Union Electric Company	EO-96-14
Union Electric Company	EM-96-149
Missouri-American Water Company	WR-97-237
St. Louis County Water Company	WR-97-382
Union Electric Company	GR-97-393
Missouri Gas Energy	GR-98-140
Laclede Gas Company	GR-98-374
United Water Missouri Inc.	WR-99-326
Laclede Gas Company	GR-99-315
Missouri Gas Energy	GO-99-258
Missouri-American Water Company	WM-2000-222
Atmos Energy Corporation	WM-2000-312
UtiliCorp/St. Joseph Merger	EM-2000-292
UtiliCorp/Empire Merger	EM-2000-369
Union Electric Company	GR-2000-512
St. Louis County Water Company	WR-2000-844
Missouri Gas Energy	GR-2001-292

Schedule TJR-1.1

# CASE PARTICIPATION OF TED ROBERTSON

Company Name	Case No.
I Hili Count I Inited Inc	ED 0004 070
UtiliCorp United, Inc.	ER-2001-672
Union Electric Company	EC-2002-1
Empire District Electric Company	ER-2002-424
Missouri Gas Energy	GM-2003-0238
Aquila Inc.	EF-2003-0465
Aquila Inc.	ER-2004-0034
Empire District Electric Company	ER-2004-0570
Aquila Inc.	EO-2005-0156
Aquila, Inc.	ER-2005-0436
Hickory Hills Water & Sewer Company	WR-2006-0250
Empire District Electric Company	ER-2006-0315
Central Jefferson County Utilities	WC-2007-0038
Missouri Gas Energy	GR-2006-0422
Central Jefferson County Utilities	SO-2007-0071
Aquila, Inc.	ER-2007-0004
Laclede Gas Company	GR-2007-0208
Kansas City Power & Light Company	ER-2007-0291
Missouri Gas Utility, Inc.	GR-2008-0060
Empire District Electric Company	ER-2008-0093
Missouri Gas Energy	GU-2007-0480
Stoddard County Sewer Company	SO-2008-0289
Missouri-American Water Company	WR-2008-0311
Union Electric Company	ER-2008-0318
Aquila, Inc., d/b/a KCPL GMOC	ER-2009-0090
Missouri Gas Energy	GR-2009-0355
Empire District Gas Company	GR-2009-0434
Lake Region Water & Sewer Company	SR-2010-0110
Lake Region Water & Sewer Company	WR-2010-0111
Missouri-American Water Company	WR-2010-0131
Kansas City Power & Light Company	ER-2010-0355
Kansas City Power & Light Company	ER-2010-0356
Timber Creek Sewer Company	SR-2010-0320
Empire District Electric Company	ER-2011-0004
Union Electric Company, d/b/a AmerenUE	ER-2011-0028
Missouri-American Water Company	WR-2011-0337
Union Electric Company, d/b/a AmerenMO	EU-2012-0027
Missouri-American Water Company	WA-2012-0066
Union Electric Company, d/b/a AmerenMO	ER-2012-0166
Laclede Gas Company	GO-2012-0363
Kansas City Power & Light Company	ER-2012-0174
Kansas City Power & Light Company GMOC	ER-2012-0175
Empire District Electric Company	ER-2012-0345

# CASE PARTICIPATION OF TED ROBERTSON

Company Name	Case No	
Emerald Pointe Utility Company, Inc.	SR-2013-0016	
Liberty Utilities	GO-2014-0006	
Lincoln County Sewer & Water, LLC	SR-2013-0321	
Lincoln County Sewer & Water, LLC	WR-2013-0322	
Lake Region Water & Sewer Company	WR-2013-0461	
Missouri Gas Energy	GR-2014-0007	
Peaceful Valley Service Company	SR-2014-0153	
Peaceful Valley Service Company	WR-2014-0154	
Hillcrest Utility Operating Company, Inc.	WO-2014-0340	
Union Electric Company, d/b/a AmerenMO	ER-2014-0258	