

Exhibit No. 50

EXHIBIT 50

PRIVATE LETTER RULINGS CITED BY SPIRE WITNESSES KUPER & FELSENTHAL

PLR NUMBER	SOURCE CITATION
201438003	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kuper Surrebuttal at p. 3, ll. 3-9
*201436037	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Felsenthal Rebuttal at p. 11, l. 19• Kuper Surrebuttal at p.3, l. 9
201436038	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kuper Surrebuttal at p.3, ll. 9-10
201519021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Felsenthal Rebuttal at p. 11, l. 19• Kuper Surrebuttal at p.3, l. 10
201534001	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kuper Surrebuttal at p.3, l. 10
201548017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kuper Surrebuttal at p.3, l. 10
201709008	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kuper Surrebuttal at p.3, l. 10
201842001	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Felsenthal Rebuttal at p. 11, l. 19
**201418024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kuper Surrebuttal at p.3, l. 12-13

* Mr. Felsenthal also cites to PLR 201421739 (Felsenthal Rebuttal at p. 11, l. 19), but it appears the PLR was mislabeled and is a duplicate of PLR 201436037.

**This PLR has already been admitted as Schedule JSR-S-02, attached to Mr. Riley's Surrebuttal Testimony.

Internal Revenue Service

Department of the Treasury
Washington, DC 20224

Number: **201438003**
Release Date: 9/19/2014
Index Number: 167.22-01

Third Party Communication: None
Date of Communication: Not Applicable

Person To Contact:
, ID No.

Telephone Number:

Refer Reply To:
CC:PSI:B06
PLR-104157-14

Date:
June 12, 2014

LEGEND:

Taxpayer =
Parent =
State A =
Commission A =
Commission B =
Year A =
Year B =
Year C =
Year D =
Date A =
Date B =
Date C =
Date D =
Case =
Director =

Dear :

This letter responds to the request, dated January 24, 2014, and additional submission dated May 19, 2014, submitted on behalf of Taxpayer for a ruling on the application of the normalization rules of the Internal Revenue Code to certain accounting and regulatory procedures, described below.

The representations set out in your letter follow.

Taxpayer is a regulated, investor-owned public utility incorporated under the laws of State A primarily engaged in the business of supplying electricity in State A. Taxpayer is subject to the regulatory jurisdiction of Commission A and Commission B with respect to terms and conditions of service and particularly the rates it may charge for the provision of service. Taxpayer's rates are established on a rate of return basis.

Taxpayer is wholly owned by Parent, and Taxpayer is included in a consolidated federal income tax return of which Parent is the common parent. Taxpayer employs the accrual method of accounting and reports on a calendar year basis.

Taxpayer filed a rate case application on Date A (Case). In its filing, Taxpayer used as its starting point actual data from the historic test period, calendar Year A. It then projected data for Year B through Year C. Taxpayer updated, amended, and supplemented its data several times during the course of the proceedings. Rates in this proceeding were intended to, and did, go into effect for the period Date B through Date C.

In computing its income tax expense element of cost of service, the tax benefits attributable to accelerated depreciation were normalized and were not flowed thru to ratepayers.

In its rate case filing, Taxpayer anticipated that it would claim accelerated depreciation, including "bonus depreciation" on its tax returns to the extent that such depreciation was available in all years for which data was provided. Additionally, Taxpayer forecasted that it would incur a net operating loss (NOL) in Year D. Taxpayer anticipated that it had the capacity to carry back a portion of this NOL with the remainder producing a net operating loss carryover (NOLC) as of the end of Year D.

On its regulatory books of account, Taxpayer "normalizes" the differences between regulatory depreciation and tax depreciation. This means that, where accelerated depreciation reduces taxable income, the taxes that a taxpayer would have paid if regulatory depreciation (instead of accelerated tax depreciation) were claimed constitute "cost-free capital" to the taxpayer. A taxpayer that normalizes these differences, like Taxpayer, maintains a reserve account showing the amount of tax liability that is deferred as a result of the accelerated depreciation. This reserve is the accumulated deferred income tax (ADIT) account. Taxpayer maintains an ADIT account. In addition, Taxpayer maintains an offsetting series of entries – a "deferred tax asset" and a "deferred tax expense" - that reflect that portion of those 'tax losses' which, while due to accelerated depreciation, did not actually defer tax because of the existence of an NOLC.

In the setting of utility rates in State, a utility's rate base is offset by its ADIT balance. In its rate case filing and throughout the proceeding, Taxpayer maintained that the ADIT balance should be reduced by the amounts that Taxpayer calculates did not

actually defer tax due to the presence of the NOLC, as represented in the deferred tax asset account. Thus, Taxpayer argued that the rate base should be reduced as of the end of Year D by its federal ADIT balance net of the deferred tax asset account attributable to the federal NOLC. It based this position on its determination that this net amount represented the true measure of federal income taxes deferred on account of its claiming accelerated tax depreciation deductions and, consequently, the actual quantity of “cost-free” capital available to it. It also asserted that the failure to reduce its rate base offset by the deferred tax asset attributable to the federal NOLC would be inconsistent with the normalization rules. Testimony by another participant in Case argued against Taxpayer’s proposed calculation of ADIT.

Commission A, in an order issued on Date D, held that it is inappropriate to include the NOL in rate base for ratemaking purposes. Commission A further stated that it is the intent of the Commission that Taxpayer comply with the normalization method of accounting and tax normalization regulations. Commission noted that if Taxpayer later obtains a ruling from the IRS which affirms Taxpayer’s position, Taxpayer may file seeking an adjustment. Commission A also held that to the extent tax normalization rules require recording the NOL to rate base in the specified years, no rate of return is authorized.

Taxpayer requests that we rule as follows:

1. Under the circumstances described above, the reduction of Taxpayer’s rate base by the full amount of its ADIT account balance unreduced by the balance of its NOLC-related account balance would be inconsistent with (and, hence, violative of) the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1 of the Income Tax regulations.
2. For purposes of Ruling 1 above, the use of a balance of Taxpayer’s NOLC-related account balance that is less than the amount attributable to accelerated depreciation computed on a “with and without” basis would be inconsistent with (and, hence, violative of) the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1 of the Income Tax regulations.
3. Under the circumstances described above, the assignment of a zero rate of return to the balance of Taxpayer’s NOLC-related account balance would be inconsistent with (and, hence, violative of) the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1.

Law and Analysis

Section 168(f)(2) of the Code provides that the depreciation deduction determined under section 168 shall not apply to any public utility property (within the meaning of section 168(i)(10)) if the taxpayer does not use a normalization method of accounting.

In order to use a normalization method of accounting, section 168(i)(9)(A)(i) of the Code requires the taxpayer, in computing its tax expense for establishing its cost of service for ratemaking purposes and reflecting operating results in its regulated books of account, to use a method of depreciation with respect to public utility property that is the same as, and a depreciation period for such property that is not shorter than, the method and period used to compute its depreciation expense for such purposes. Under section 168(i)(9)(A)(ii), if the amount allowable as a deduction under section 168 differs from the amount that would be allowable as a deduction under section 167 using the method, period, first and last year convention, and salvage value used to compute regulated tax expense under section 168(i)(9)(A)(i), the taxpayer must make adjustments to a reserve to reflect the deferral of taxes resulting from such difference.

Section 168(i)(9)(B)(i) of the Code provides that one way the requirements of section 168(i)(9)(A) will not be satisfied is if the taxpayer, for ratemaking purposes, uses a procedure or adjustment which is inconsistent with such requirements. Under section 168(i)(9)(B)(ii), such inconsistent procedures and adjustments include the use of an estimate or projection of the taxpayer's tax expense, depreciation expense, or reserve for deferred taxes under section 168(i)(9)(A)(ii), unless such estimate or projection is also used, for ratemaking purposes, with respect to all three of these items and with respect to the rate base.

Former section 167(l) of the Code generally provided that public utilities were entitled to use accelerated methods for depreciation if they used a "normalization method of accounting." A normalization method of accounting was defined in former section 167(l)(3)(G) in a manner consistent with that found in section 168(i)(9)(A). Section 1.167(l)-1(a)(1) of the Income Tax Regulations provides that the normalization requirements for public utility property pertain only to the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the use of an accelerated method of depreciation for computing the allowance for depreciation under section 167 and the use of straight-line depreciation for computing tax expense and depreciation expense for purposes of establishing cost of services and for reflecting operating results in regulated books of account. These regulations do not pertain to other book-tax timing differences with respect to state income taxes, F.I.C.A. taxes, construction costs, or any other taxes and items.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(i) provides that the reserve established for public utility property should reflect the total amount of the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the taxpayer's use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(iii) provides that the amount of federal income tax liability deferred as a result of the use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes is the excess (computed without regard to credits) of the amount the tax liability would have been had the depreciation method for ratemaking purposes been used over the amount of the actual tax liability. This amount shall be taken into account

for the taxable year in which the different methods of depreciation are used. If, however, in respect of any taxable year the use of a method of depreciation other than a subsection (1) method for purposes of determining the taxpayer's reasonable allowance under section 167(a) results in a net operating loss carryover to a year succeeding such taxable year which would not have arisen (or an increase in such carryover which would not have arisen) had the taxpayer determined his reasonable allowance under section 167(a) using a subsection (1) method, then the amount and time of the deferral of tax liability shall be taken into account in such appropriate time and manner as is satisfactory to the district director.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(2)(i) provides that the taxpayer must credit this amount of deferred taxes to a reserve for deferred taxes, a depreciation reserve, or other reserve account. This regulation further provides that, with respect to any account, the aggregate amount allocable to deferred tax under section 167(1) shall not be reduced except to reflect the amount for any taxable year by which Federal income taxes are greater by reason of the prior use of different methods of depreciation. That section also notes that the aggregate amount allocable to deferred taxes may be reduced to reflect the amount for any taxable year by which federal income taxes are greater by reason of the prior use of different methods of depreciation under section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(i) or to reflect asset retirements or the expiration of the period for depreciation used for determining the allowance for depreciation under section 167(a).

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(6)(i) provides that, notwithstanding the provisions of subparagraph (1) of that paragraph, a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes under section 167(l) which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(6)(ii) provides that, for the purpose of determining the maximum amount of the reserve to be excluded from the rate base (or to be included as no-cost capital) under subdivision (i), above, if solely an historical period is used to determine depreciation for Federal income tax expense for ratemaking purposes, then the amount of the reserve account for that period is the amount of the reserve (determined under section 1.167(l)-1(h)(2)(i)) at the end of the historical period. If such determination is made by reference both to an historical portion and to a future portion of a period, the amount of the reserve account for the period is the amount of the reserve at the end of the historical portion of the period and a pro rata portion of the amount of any projected increase to be credited or decrease to be charged to the account during the future portion of the period.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h) requires that a utility must maintain a reserve reflecting the total amount of the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the taxpayer's

use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes. Taxpayer has done so. Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(6)(i) provides that a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking. Section 56(a)(1)(D) provides that, with respect to public utility property the Secretary shall prescribe the requirements of a normalization method of accounting for that section.

Regarding the first issue, § 1.167(l)-1(h)(6)(i) provides that a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking. Because the ADIT account, the reserve account for deferred taxes, reduces rate base, it is clear that the portion of an NOLC that is attributable to accelerated depreciation must be taken into account in calculating the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes (ADIT). Thus, the order by Commission A is not in accord with the normalization requirements.

Regarding the second issue, § 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(iii) makes clear that the effects of an NOLC must be taken into account for normalization purposes. Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(iii) provides generally that, if, in respect of any year, the use of other than regulatory depreciation for tax purposes results in an NOLC carryover (or an increase in an NOLC which would not have arisen had the taxpayer claimed only regulatory depreciation for tax purposes), then the amount and time of the deferral of tax liability shall be taken into account in such appropriate time and manner as is satisfactory to the district director. While that section provides no specific mandate on methods, it does provide that the Service has discretion to determine whether a particular method satisfies the normalization requirements. The "with or without" methodology employed by Taxpayer is specifically designed to ensure that the portion of the NOLC attributable to accelerated depreciation is correctly taken into account by maximizing the amount of the NOLC attributable to accelerated depreciation. This methodology provides certainty and prevents the possibility of "flow through" of the benefits of accelerated depreciation to ratepayers. Under these facts, any method other than the "with and without" method would not provide the same level of certainty and therefore the use of any other methodology is inconsistent with the normalization rules.

Regarding the third issue, assignment of a zero rate of return to the balance of Taxpayer's NOLC-related account balance would, in effect, flow the tax benefits of accelerated depreciation deductions through to rate payers. This would violate the normalization provisions.

We rule as follows:

1. Under the circumstances described above, the reduction of Taxpayer's rate base by the full amount of its ADIT account balance unreduced by the balance of its NOLC-related account balance would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1 of the Income Tax regulations.
2. For purposes of Ruling 1 above, the use of a balance of Taxpayer's NOLC-related account balance that is less than the amount attributable to accelerated depreciation computed on a "with and without" basis would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1 of the Income Tax regulations.
3. Under the circumstances described above, the assignment of a zero rate of return to the balance of Taxpayer's NOLC-related account balance would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1.

This ruling is based on the representations submitted by Taxpayer and is only valid if those representations are accurate. The accuracy of these representations is subject to verification on audit.

Except as specifically determined above, no opinion is expressed or implied concerning the Federal income tax consequences of the matters described above.

This ruling is directed only to the taxpayer who requested it. Section 6110(k)(3) of the Code provides it may not be used or cited as precedent. In accordance with the power of attorney on file with this office, a copy of this letter is being sent to your authorized representative. We are also sending a copy of this letter ruling to the Director.

Sincerely,

Peter C. Friedman
Senior Technician Reviewer, Branch 6
(Passthroughs & Special Industries)

cc:

Internal Revenue Service

Department of the Treasury
Washington, DC 20224

Number: **201436037**
Release Date: 9/5/2014
Index Number: 167.22-01

Third Party Communication: None
Date of Communication: Not Applicable

Person To Contact:
, ID No.

Telephone Number:

Refer Reply To:
CC:PSI:B06
PLR-148310-13

Date:
May 22, 2014

LEGEND:

- Taxpayer =
- Parent =
- State A =
- State B =
- State C =
- Commission A =
- Commission B =
- Commission C =
- Year A =
- Year B =
- Date A =
- Date B =
- Date C =
- Case =
- Director =

Dear :

This letter responds to the request, dated November 25, 2013, of Taxpayer for a ruling on the application of the normalization rules of the Internal Revenue Code to certain accounting and regulatory procedures, described below.

The representations set out in your letter follow.

Taxpayer is a regulated public utility incorporated in State A and State B. It is wholly owned by Parent. Taxpayer is engaged in the transmission, distribution, and supply of electricity in State A and State C. Taxpayer is subject to the regulatory jurisdiction of Commission A, Commission B, and Commission C with respect to terms and conditions of service and particularly the rates it may charge for the provision of service. Taxpayer's rates are established on a rate of return basis. Taxpayer takes accelerated depreciation, including "bonus depreciation" where available and, for each year beginning in Year A and ending in Year B, Taxpayer individually (as well as the consolidated return filed by Parent) has or expects to, produce a net operating loss (NOL). On its regulatory books of account, Taxpayer "normalizes" the differences between regulatory depreciation and tax depreciation. This means that, where accelerated depreciation reduces taxable income, the taxes that a taxpayer would have paid if regulatory depreciation (instead of accelerated tax depreciation) were claimed constitute "cost-free capital" to the taxpayer. A taxpayer that normalizes these differences, like Taxpayer, maintains a reserve account showing the amount of tax liability that is deferred as a result of the accelerated depreciation. This reserve is the accumulated deferred income tax (ADIT) account. Taxpayer maintains an ADIT account. In addition, Taxpayer maintains an offsetting series of entries – a "deferred tax asset" and a "deferred tax expense" - that reflect that portion of those 'tax losses' which, while due to accelerated depreciation, did not actually defer tax because of the existence of an net operating loss carryover (NOLC). Taxpayer, for normalization purposes, calculates the portion of the NOLC attributable to accelerated depreciation using a "with or without" methodology, meaning that an NOLC is attributable to accelerated depreciation to the extent of the lesser of the accelerated depreciation or the NOLC.

Taxpayer filed a general rate case with Commission B on Date A (Case). The test year used in the Case was the 12 month period ending on Date B. In computing its income tax expense element of cost of service, the tax benefits attributable to accelerated depreciation were normalized in accordance with Commission B policy and were not flowed thru to ratepayers. The data originally filed in Case included six months of forecast data, which the Taxpayer updated with actual data in the course of proceedings. In establishing the rate base on which Taxpayer was to be allowed to earn a return Commission B offset rate base by Taxpayer's ADIT balance, using a 13-month average of the month-end balances of the relevant accounts. Taxpayer argued that the ADIT balance should be reduced by the amounts that Taxpayer calculates did not actually defer tax due to the presence of the NOLC, as represented in the deferred tax asset account. Testimony by various other participants in Case argued against Taxpayer's proposed calculation of ADIT. One proposal made to Commission B was, if Commission B allowed Taxpayer to reduce the ADIT balance as Taxpayer proposed, then Taxpayer's income tax expense element of service should be reduced by that same amount.

Commission B, in an order issued on Date C, allowed Taxpayer to reduce ADIT by the amount that Taxpayer calculates did not actually defer tax due to the presence of the NOLC and ordered Taxpayer to seek a ruling on the effects of an NOLC on ADIT. Rates went into effect on Date C.

Taxpayer proposed, and Commission B accepted, that it be permitted to annualize, rather than average, its reliability plant additions and to extend the period of anticipated reliability plant additions to be included in rate base for an additional quarter. Taxpayer also proposed, and Commission B accepted, that no additional ADIT be reflected as a result of these adjustments inasmuch as any additional book and tax depreciation produced by considering these assets would simply increase Taxpayer's NOLC and thus there would be no net impact on ADIT.

Taxpayer requests that we rule as follows:

1. Under the circumstances described above, the reduction of Taxpayer's rate base by the full amount of its ADIT account balances offset by a portion of its NOLC-related account balance that is less than the amount attributable to accelerated depreciation computed on a "with or without" basis would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1 of the Income Tax regulations.
2. The imputation of incremental ADIT on account of the reliability plant addition adjustments described above would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1.
3. Under the circumstances described above, any reduction in Taxpayer's tax expense element of cost of service to reflect the tax benefit of its NOLC would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1.

Law and Analysis

Section 168(f)(2) of the Code provides that the depreciation deduction determined under section 168 shall not apply to any public utility property (within the meaning of section 168(i)(10)) if the taxpayer does not use a normalization method of accounting.

In order to use a normalization method of accounting, section 168(i)(9)(A)(i) of the Code requires the taxpayer, in computing its tax expense for establishing its cost of service for ratemaking purposes and reflecting operating results in its regulated books of account, to use a method of depreciation with respect to public utility property that is the same as, and a depreciation period for such property that is not shorter than, the method and period used to compute its depreciation expense for such purposes. Under section 168(i)(9)(A)(ii), if the amount allowable as a deduction under section 168 differs from the amount that would be allowable as a deduction under section 167 using the method, period, first and last year convention, and salvage value used to compute

regulated tax expense under section 168(i)(9)(A)(i), the taxpayer must make adjustments to a reserve to reflect the deferral of taxes resulting from such difference.

Section 168(i)(9)(B)(i) of the Code provides that one way the requirements of section 168(i)(9)(A) will not be satisfied is if the taxpayer, for ratemaking purposes, uses a procedure or adjustment which is inconsistent with such requirements. Under section 168(i)(9)(B)(ii), such inconsistent procedures and adjustments include the use of an estimate or projection of the taxpayer's tax expense, depreciation expense, or reserve for deferred taxes under section 168(i)(9)(A)(ii), unless such estimate or projection is also used, for ratemaking purposes, with respect to all three of these items and with respect to the rate base.

Former section 167(l) of the Code generally provided that public utilities were entitled to use accelerated methods for depreciation if they used a "normalization method of accounting." A normalization method of accounting was defined in former section 167(l)(3)(G) in a manner consistent with that found in section 168(i)(9)(A). Section 1.167(1)-1(a)(1) of the Income Tax Regulations provides that the normalization requirements for public utility property pertain only to the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the use of an accelerated method of depreciation for computing the allowance for depreciation under section 167 and the use of straight-line depreciation for computing tax expense and depreciation expense for purposes of establishing cost of services and for reflecting operating results in regulated books of account. These regulations do not pertain to other book-tax timing differences with respect to state income taxes, F.I.C.A. taxes, construction costs, or any other taxes and items.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(i) provides that the reserve established for public utility property should reflect the total amount of the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the taxpayer's use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes.

Section 1.167(1)-1(h)(1)(iii) provides that the amount of federal income tax liability deferred as a result of the use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes is the excess (computed without regard to credits) of the amount the tax liability would have been had the depreciation method for ratemaking purposes been used over the amount of the actual tax liability. This amount shall be taken into account for the taxable year in which the different methods of depreciation are used. If, however, in respect of any taxable year the use of a method of depreciation other than a subsection (1) method for purposes of determining the taxpayer's reasonable allowance under section 167(a) results in a net operating loss carryover to a year succeeding such taxable year which would not have arisen (or an increase in such carryover which would not have arisen) had the taxpayer determined his reasonable allowance under section 167(a) using a subsection (1) method, then the amount and time of the deferral of tax

liability shall be taken into account in such appropriate time and manner as is satisfactory to the district director.

Section 1.167(1)-1(h)(2)(i) provides that the taxpayer must credit this amount of deferred taxes to a reserve for deferred taxes, a depreciation reserve, or other reserve account. This regulation further provides that, with respect to any account, the aggregate amount allocable to deferred tax under section 167(1) shall not be reduced except to reflect the amount for any taxable year by which Federal income taxes are greater by reason of the prior use of different methods of depreciation. That section also notes that the aggregate amount allocable to deferred taxes may be reduced to reflect the amount for any taxable year by which federal income taxes are greater by reason of the prior use of different methods of depreciation under section 1.167(1)-1(h)(1)(i) or to reflect asset retirements or the expiration of the period for depreciation used for determining the allowance for depreciation under section 167(a).

Section 1.167(1)-(h)(6)(i) provides that, notwithstanding the provisions of subparagraph (1) of that paragraph, a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes under section 167(l) which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking.

Section 1.167(1)-(h)(6)(ii) provides that, for the purpose of determining the maximum amount of the reserve to be excluded from the rate base (or to be included as no-cost capital) under subdivision (i), above, if solely an historical period is used to determine depreciation for Federal income tax expense for ratemaking purposes, then the amount of the reserve account for that period is the amount of the reserve (determined under section 1.167(1)-1(h)(2)(i)) at the end of the historical period. If such determination is made by reference both to an historical portion and to a future portion of a period, the amount of the reserve account for the period is the amount of the reserve at the end of the historical portion of the period and a pro rata portion of the amount of any projected increase to be credited or decrease to be charged to the account during the future portion of the period.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h) requires that a utility must maintain a reserve reflecting the total amount of the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the taxpayer's use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes. Taxpayer has done so. Section 1.167(1)-(h)(6)(i) provides that a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount

of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking. Section 56(a)(1)(D) provides that, with respect to public utility property the Secretary shall prescribe the requirements of a normalization method of accounting for that section.

In Case, Commission B has reduced rate base by Taxpayer's ADIT account, as modified by the account which Taxpayer has designed to calculate the effects of the NOLC. Section 1.167(1)-1(h)(1)(iii) makes clear that the effects of an NOLC must be taken into account for normalization purposes. Further, while that section provides no specific mandate on methods, it does provide that the Service has discretion to determine whether a particular method satisfies the normalization requirements. Section 1.167(1)-(h)(6)(i) provides that a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking. Because the ADIT account, the reserve account for deferred taxes, reduces rate base, it is clear that the portion of an NOLC that is attributable to accelerated depreciation must be taken into account in calculating the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes (ADIT). Thus, the order by Commission B is in accord with the normalization requirements. The "with or without" methodology employed by Taxpayer is specifically designed to ensure that the portion of the NOLC attributable to accelerated depreciation is correctly taken into account by maximizing the amount of the NOLC attributable to accelerated depreciation. This methodology provides certainty and prevents the possibility of "flow through" of the benefits of accelerated depreciation to ratepayers. Under these facts, any method other than the "with and without" method would not provide the same level of certainty and therefore the use of any other methodology is inconsistent with the normalization rules.

Regarding the second issue, § 1.167(1)-(h)(6)(i) provides, as noted above, that a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking. Increasing Taxpayer's ADIT account by an amount representing those taxes that would have been deferred absent the NOLC increases the ADIT reserve account (which will then reduce rate base) beyond the permissible amount.

Regarding the third issue, reduction of Taxpayer's tax expense element of cost of service, we believe that such reduction would, in effect, flow through the tax benefits of accelerated depreciation deductions through to rate payers even though the Taxpayer has not yet realized such benefits. This would violate the normalization provisions.

We rule as follows:

1. Under the circumstances described above, the reduction of Taxpayer's rate base by the full amount of its ADIT account balances offset by a portion of its NOLC-related account balance that is less than the amount attributable to accelerated depreciation computed on a "with or without" basis would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1 of the Income Tax regulations.
2. The imputation of incremental ADIT on account of the reliability plant addition adjustments described above would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1.
3. Under the circumstances described above, any reduction in Taxpayer's tax expense element of cost of service to reflect the tax benefit of its NOLC would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1.

This ruling is based on the representations submitted by Taxpayer and is only valid if those representations are accurate. The accuracy of these representations is subject to verification on audit.

Except as specifically determined above, no opinion is expressed or implied concerning the Federal income tax consequences of the matters described above.

This ruling is directed only to the taxpayer who requested it. Section 6110(k)(3) of the Code provides it may not be used or cited as precedent. In accordance with the power of attorney on file with this office, a copy of this letter is being sent to your authorized representative. We are also sending a copy of this letter ruling to the Director.

Sincerely,

Peter C. Friedman
Senior Technician Reviewer, Branch 6
(Passthroughs & Special Industries)

cc:

The representations set out in your letter follow.

Taxpayer is a regulated public utility incorporated in State A and State B. It is wholly owned, through a limited liability company, by Parent. Taxpayer is engaged in the transmission, distribution, and supply of electricity in State A and State C. Taxpayer also provides natural gas and natural gas transmission services in State A. Taxpayer is subject to the regulatory jurisdiction of Commission A, Commission B, and Commission C with respect to terms and conditions of service and particularly the rates it may charge for the provision of service. Taxpayer's rates are established on a rate of return basis. Taxpayer takes accelerated depreciation, including "bonus depreciation" where available and, for each year beginning in Year A and ending in Year B, Taxpayer individually (as well as the consolidated return filed by Parent) has or expects to, produce a net operating loss (NOL). On its regulatory books of account, Taxpayer "normalizes" the differences between regulatory depreciation and tax depreciation. This means that, where accelerated depreciation reduces taxable income, the taxes that a taxpayer would have paid if regulatory depreciation (instead of accelerated tax depreciation) were claimed constitute "cost-free capital" to the taxpayer. A taxpayer that normalizes these differences, like Taxpayer, maintains a reserve account showing the amount of tax liability that is deferred as a result of the accelerated depreciation. This reserve is the accumulated deferred income tax (ADIT) account. Taxpayer maintains an ADIT account. In addition, Taxpayer maintains an offsetting series of entries – a "deferred tax asset" and a "deferred tax expense" - that reflect that portion of those 'tax losses' which, while due to accelerated depreciation, did not actually defer tax because of the existence of an net operating loss carryover (NOLC). Taxpayer, for normalization purposes, calculates the portion of the NOLC attributable to accelerated depreciation using a "with or without" methodology, meaning that an NOLC is attributable to accelerated depreciation to the extent of the lesser of the accelerated depreciation or the NOLC.

Taxpayer filed a general rate case with Commission B on Date A (Case). The test year used in the Case was the 12 month period ending on Date B. In computing its income tax expense element of cost of service, the tax benefits attributable to accelerated depreciation were normalized in accordance with Commission B policy and were not flowed thru to ratepayers. The data originally filed in Case was updated in the course of proceedings. In establishing the rate base on which Taxpayer was to be allowed to earn a return Commission B offset rate base by Taxpayer's ADIT balance, using a 13-month average of the month-end balances of the relevant accounts. Taxpayer argued that the ADIT balance should be reduced by the amounts that Taxpayer calculates did not actually defer tax due to the presence of the NOLC, as represented in the deferred tax asset account. Testimony by various other participants in Case argued against Taxpayer's proposed calculation of ADIT.

On Date C, a settlement agreement was filed with Commission B, incorporating the Taxpayer's proposed treatment of the tax consequences of its NOLC. In an order

issued on Date D, Commission B issued an order approving the settlement agreement and also ordered Taxpayer to seek a ruling on the effects of an NOLC on ADIT. Rates went into effect on Date E.

Taxpayer proposed, and Commission B accepted, that it be permitted to annualize, rather than average, its reliability plant additions and to extend the period of anticipated reliability plant additions to be included in rate base for an additional eight months. Taxpayer also proposed, and Commission B accepted, that no additional ADIT be reflected as a result of these adjustments inasmuch as any additional book and tax depreciation produced by considering these assets would simply increase Taxpayer's NOLC and thus there would be no net impact on ADIT.

Taxpayer requests that we rule as follows:

1. Under the circumstances described above, the reduction of Taxpayer's rate base by the full amount of its ADIT account balances offset by a portion of its NOLC-related account balance that is less than the amount attributable to accelerated depreciation computed on a "with or without" basis would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1 of the Income Tax regulations.
2. The imputation of incremental ADIT on account of the reliability plant addition adjustments described above would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1.

Law and Analysis

Section 168(f)(2) of the Code provides that the depreciation deduction determined under section 168 shall not apply to any public utility property (within the meaning of section 168(i)(10)) if the taxpayer does not use a normalization method of accounting.

In order to use a normalization method of accounting, section 168(i)(9)(A)(i) of the Code requires the taxpayer, in computing its tax expense for establishing its cost of service for ratemaking purposes and reflecting operating results in its regulated books of account, to use a method of depreciation with respect to public utility property that is the same as, and a depreciation period for such property that is not shorter than, the method and period used to compute its depreciation expense for such purposes. Under section 168(i)(9)(A)(ii), if the amount allowable as a deduction under section 168 differs from the amount that would be allowable as a deduction under section 167 using the method, period, first and last year convention, and salvage value used to compute regulated tax expense under section 168(i)(9)(A)(i), the taxpayer must make adjustments to a reserve to reflect the deferral of taxes resulting from such difference.

Section 168(i)(9)(B)(i) of the Code provides that one way the requirements of section 168(i)(9)(A) will not be satisfied is if the taxpayer, for ratemaking purposes, uses

a procedure or adjustment which is inconsistent with such requirements. Under section 168(i)(9)(B)(ii), such inconsistent procedures and adjustments include the use of an estimate or projection of the taxpayer's tax expense, depreciation expense, or reserve for deferred taxes under section 168(i)(9)(A)(ii), unless such estimate or projection is also used, for ratemaking purposes, with respect to all three of these items and with respect to the rate base.

Former section 167(l) of the Code generally provided that public utilities were entitled to use accelerated methods for depreciation if they used a "normalization method of accounting." A normalization method of accounting was defined in former section 167(l)(3)(G) in a manner consistent with that found in section 168(i)(9)(A). Section 1.167(1)-1(a)(1) of the Income Tax Regulations provides that the normalization requirements for public utility property pertain only to the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the use of an accelerated method of depreciation for computing the allowance for depreciation under section 167 and the use of straight-line depreciation for computing tax expense and depreciation expense for purposes of establishing cost of services and for reflecting operating results in regulated books of account. These regulations do not pertain to other book-tax timing differences with respect to state income taxes, F.I.C.A. taxes, construction costs, or any other taxes and items.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(i) provides that the reserve established for public utility property should reflect the total amount of the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the taxpayer's use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes.

Section 1.167(1)-1(h)(1)(iii) provides that the amount of federal income tax liability deferred as a result of the use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes is the excess (computed without regard to credits) of the amount the tax liability would have been had the depreciation method for ratemaking purposes been used over the amount of the actual tax liability. This amount shall be taken into account for the taxable year in which the different methods of depreciation are used. If, however, in respect of any taxable year the use of a method of depreciation other than a subsection (1) method for purposes of determining the taxpayer's reasonable allowance under section 167(a) results in a net operating loss carryover to a year succeeding such taxable year which would not have arisen (or an increase in such carryover which would not have arisen) had the taxpayer determined his reasonable allowance under section 167(a) using a subsection (1) method, then the amount and time of the deferral of tax liability shall be taken into account in such appropriate time and manner as is satisfactory to the district director.

Section 1.167(1)-1(h)(2)(i) provides that the taxpayer must credit this amount of deferred taxes to a reserve for deferred taxes, a depreciation reserve, or other reserve account. This regulation further provides that, with respect to any account, the

aggregate amount allocable to deferred tax under section 167(1) shall not be reduced except to reflect the amount for any taxable year by which Federal income taxes are greater by reason of the prior use of different methods of depreciation. That section also notes that the aggregate amount allocable to deferred taxes may be reduced to reflect the amount for any taxable year by which federal income taxes are greater by reason of the prior use of different methods of depreciation under section 1.167(1)-1(h)(1)(i) or to reflect asset retirements or the expiration of the period for depreciation used for determining the allowance for depreciation under section 167(a).

Section 1.167(1)-(h)(6)(i) provides that, notwithstanding the provisions of subparagraph (1) of that paragraph, a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes under section 167(l) which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking.

Section 1.167(1)-(h)(6)(ii) provides that, for the purpose of determining the maximum amount of the reserve to be excluded from the rate base (or to be included as no-cost capital) under subdivision (i), above, if solely an historical period is used to determine depreciation for Federal income tax expense for ratemaking purposes, then the amount of the reserve account for that period is the amount of the reserve (determined under section 1.167(1)-1(h)(2)(i)) at the end of the historical period. If such determination is made by reference both to an historical portion and to a future portion of a period, the amount of the reserve account for the period is the amount of the reserve at the end of the historical portion of the period and a pro rata portion of the amount of any projected increase to be credited or decrease to be charged to the account during the future portion of the period.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h) requires that a utility must maintain a reserve reflecting the total amount of the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the taxpayer's use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes. Taxpayer has done so. Section 1.167(1)-(h)(6)(i) provides that a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking. Section 56(a)(1)(D) provides that, with respect to public utility property the Secretary shall prescribe the requirements of a normalization method of accounting for that section.

In Case, Commission B has reduced rate base by Taxpayer's ADIT account, as modified by the account which Taxpayer has designed to calculate the effects of the NOLC. Section 1.167(1)-1(h)(1)(iii) makes clear that the effects of an NOLC must be taken into account for normalization purposes. Further, while that section provides no specific mandate on methods, it does provide that the Service has discretion to determine whether a particular method satisfies the normalization requirements. Section 1.167(1)-(h)(6)(i) provides that a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking. Because the ADIT account, the reserve account for deferred taxes, reduces rate base, it is clear that the portion of an NOLC that is attributable to accelerated depreciation must be taken into account in calculating the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes (ADIT). Thus, the order by Commission B is in accord with the normalization requirements. The "with or without" methodology employed by Taxpayer is specifically designed to ensure that the portion of the NOLC attributable to accelerated depreciation is correctly taken into account by maximizing the amount of the NOLC attributable to accelerated depreciation. This methodology provides certainty and prevents the possibility of "flow through" of the benefits of accelerated depreciation to ratepayers. Under these facts, any method other than the "with and without" method would not provide the same level of certainty and therefore the use of any other methodology is inconsistent with the normalization rules.

Regarding the second issue, § 1.167(1)-(h)(6)(i) provides, as noted above, that a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking. Increasing Taxpayer's ADIT account by an amount representing those taxes that would have been deferred absent the NOLC increases the ADIT reserve account (which will then reduce rate base) beyond the permissible amount.

We rule as follows:

1. Under the circumstances described above, the reduction of Taxpayer's rate base by the full amount of its ADIT account balances offset by a portion of its NOLC-related account balance that is less than the amount attributable to accelerated depreciation computed on a "with or without" basis would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1 of the Income Tax regulations.

2. The imputation of incremental ADIT on account of the reliability plant addition adjustments described above would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1.

This ruling is based on the representations submitted by Taxpayer and is only valid if those representations are accurate. The accuracy of these representations is subject to verification on audit.

Except as specifically determined above, no opinion is expressed or implied concerning the Federal income tax consequences of the matters described above.

This ruling is directed only to the taxpayer who requested it. Section 6110(k)(3) of the Code provides it may not be used or cited as precedent. In accordance with the power of attorney on file with this office, a copy of this letter is being sent to your authorized representative. We are also sending a copy of this letter ruling to the Director.

Sincerely,

Peter C. Friedman
Senior Technician Reviewer, Branch 6
(Passthroughs & Special Industries)

cc:

Internal Revenue Service

Department of the Treasury
Washington, DC 20224

Number: **201519021**
Release Date: 5/8/2015
Index Number: 167.22-01

Third Party Communication: None
Date of Communication: Not Applicable

Person To Contact:
, ID No.

Telephone Number:

Refer Reply To:
CC:PSI:B06
PLR-136851-14
Date:
February 04, 2015

LEGEND:

Taxpayer =
Parent =
State A =
Commission =
Year A =
Year B =
Year C =
Year D =
Date A =
Date B =
Date C =
Date D =
Case =
Director =

Dear :

This letter responds to the request, dated October 1, 2014, submitted on behalf of Taxpayer for a ruling on the application of the normalization rules of the Internal Revenue Code to certain accounting and regulatory procedures, described below.

The representations set out in your letter follow.

Taxpayer is a regulated, investor-owned public utility incorporated under the laws of State A primarily engaged in the business of supplying natural gas service in State A. Taxpayer is subject to the regulatory jurisdiction of Commission with respect to terms and conditions of service and as to the rates it may charge for the provision of service. Taxpayer's rates are established on a cost of service basis.

Taxpayer is wholly owned by Parent, and Taxpayer is included in a consolidated federal income tax return of which Parent is the common parent. Taxpayer employs the accrual method of accounting and reports on a calendar year basis.

Taxpayer filed a rate case application on Date A (Case). In its filing, Taxpayer used as its starting point actual data from the historic test period, calendar Year A. It then projected data for Year B through Year D. Taxpayer updated, amended, and supplemented its data several times during the course of the proceedings. Rates in this proceeding were intended to, and did, go into effect for the period Date B through Date C.

In computing its income tax expense element of cost of service, the tax benefits attributable to accelerated depreciation were normalized and were not flowed thru to ratepayers.

In its rate case filing, Taxpayer anticipated that it would claim accelerated depreciation, including "bonus depreciation" on its tax returns to the extent that such depreciation was available in all years for which data was provided. Additionally, Taxpayer forecasted that it would incur a net operating loss (NOL) in each of Year B, Year C, and Year D. Taxpayer anticipated that it had the capacity to carry back a portion of this NOL with the remainder producing a net operating loss carryover (NOLC) as of the end of Year C and Year D, the beginning and end of the test period.

On its regulatory books of account, Taxpayer "normalizes" the differences between regulatory depreciation and tax depreciation. This means that, where accelerated depreciation reduces taxable income, the taxes that a taxpayer would have paid if regulatory depreciation (instead of accelerated tax depreciation) were claimed constitute "cost-free capital" to the taxpayer. A taxpayer that normalizes these differences, like Taxpayer, maintains a reserve account showing the amount of tax liability that is deferred as a result of the accelerated depreciation. This reserve is the accumulated deferred income tax (ADIT) account. Taxpayer maintains an ADIT account. In addition, Taxpayer maintains an offsetting series of entries – a "deferred tax asset" and a "deferred tax expense" - that reflect that portion of those 'tax losses' which, while due to accelerated depreciation, did not actually defer tax because of the existence of an NOLC.

In the setting of utility rates in State, a utility's rate base is offset by its ADIT balance. In its rate case filing and throughout the proceeding, Taxpayer maintained that the ADIT balance should be reduced by the amounts that Taxpayer calculates did not actually defer tax due to the presence of the NOLC, as represented in the deferred tax asset account. Thus, Taxpayer argued that the rate base should be reduced as of the end of Year D by its federal ADIT balance net of the deferred tax asset account attributable to the federal NOLC. It based this position on its determination that this net amount represented the true measure of federal income taxes deferred on account of its claiming accelerated tax depreciation deductions and, consequently, the actual quantity of "cost-free" capital available to it. It also asserted that the failure to reduce its rate base offset by the deferred tax asset attributable to the federal NOLC would be inconsistent with the normalization rules. Testimony by another participant in Case argued against Taxpayer's proposed calculation of ADIT.

Commission, in an order issued on Date D, held that it is inappropriate to include the NOL in rate base for ratemaking purposes. Commission further stated that it is the intent of the Commission that Taxpayer comply with the normalization method of accounting and tax normalization regulations. Commission noted that if Taxpayer later obtains a ruling from the IRS which affirms Taxpayer's position, Taxpayer may file seeking an adjustment. Commission also held that to the extent tax normalization rules require including the NOL in rate base in the specified years, no rate of return is authorized.

Taxpayer requests that we rule as follows:

1. Under the circumstances described above, the reduction of Taxpayer's rate base by the full amount of its ADIT account balance unreduced by the balance of its NOLC-related account balance would be inconsistent with (and, hence, violative of) the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1 of the Income Tax regulations.
2. For purposes of Ruling 1 above, the use of a balance of Taxpayer's NOLC-related account balance that is less than the amount attributable to accelerated depreciation computed on a "with and without" basis would be inconsistent with (and, hence, violative of) the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1 of the Income Tax regulations.
3. Under the circumstances described above, the assignment of a zero rate of return to the balance of Taxpayer's NOLC-related account balance would be inconsistent with (and, hence, violative of) the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1.

Law and Analysis

Section 168(f)(2) of the Code provides that the depreciation deduction determined under section 168 shall not apply to any public utility property (within the

meaning of section 168(i)(10)) if the taxpayer does not use a normalization method of accounting.

In order to use a normalization method of accounting, section 168(i)(9)(A)(i) of the Code requires the taxpayer, in computing its tax expense for establishing its cost of service for ratemaking purposes and reflecting operating results in its regulated books of account, to use a method of depreciation with respect to public utility property that is the same as, and a depreciation period for such property that is not shorter than, the method and period used to compute its depreciation expense for such purposes. Under section 168(i)(9)(A)(ii), if the amount allowable as a deduction under section 168 differs from the amount that would be allowable as a deduction under section 167 using the method, period, first and last year convention, and salvage value used to compute regulated tax expense under section 168(i)(9)(A)(i), the taxpayer must make adjustments to a reserve to reflect the deferral of taxes resulting from such difference.

Section 168(i)(9)(B)(i) of the Code provides that one way the requirements of section 168(i)(9)(A) will not be satisfied is if the taxpayer, for ratemaking purposes, uses a procedure or adjustment which is inconsistent with such requirements. Under section 168(i)(9)(B)(ii), such inconsistent procedures and adjustments include the use of an estimate or projection of the taxpayer's tax expense, depreciation expense, or reserve for deferred taxes under section 168(i)(9)(A)(ii), unless such estimate or projection is also used, for ratemaking purposes, with respect to all three of these items and with respect to the rate base.

Former section 167(l) of the Code generally provided that public utilities were entitled to use accelerated methods for depreciation if they used a "normalization method of accounting." A normalization method of accounting was defined in former section 167(l)(3)(G) in a manner consistent with that found in section 168(i)(9)(A). Section 1.167(l)-1(a)(1) of the Income Tax Regulations provides that the normalization requirements for public utility property pertain only to the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the use of an accelerated method of depreciation for computing the allowance for depreciation under section 167 and the use of straight-line depreciation for computing tax expense and depreciation expense for purposes of establishing cost of services and for reflecting operating results in regulated books of account. These regulations do not pertain to other book-tax timing differences with respect to state income taxes, F.I.C.A. taxes, construction costs, or any other taxes and items.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(i) provides that the reserve established for public utility property should reflect the total amount of the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the taxpayer's use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(iii) provides that the amount of federal income tax liability deferred as a result of the use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes is the excess (computed without regard to credits) of the amount the tax liability would have been had the depreciation method for ratemaking purposes been used over the amount of the actual tax liability. This amount shall be taken into account for the taxable year in which the different methods of depreciation are used. If, however, in respect of any taxable year the use of a method of depreciation other than a subsection (1) method for purposes of determining the taxpayer's reasonable allowance under section 167(a) results in a net operating loss carryover to a year succeeding such taxable year which would not have arisen (or an increase in such carryover which would not have arisen) had the taxpayer determined his reasonable allowance under section 167(a) using a subsection (1) method, then the amount and time of the deferral of tax liability shall be taken into account in such appropriate time and manner as is satisfactory to the district director.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(2)(i) provides that the taxpayer must credit this amount of deferred taxes to a reserve for deferred taxes, a depreciation reserve, or other reserve account. This regulation further provides that, with respect to any account, the aggregate amount allocable to deferred tax under section 167(1) shall not be reduced except to reflect the amount for any taxable year by which Federal income taxes are greater by reason of the prior use of different methods of depreciation. That section also notes that the aggregate amount allocable to deferred taxes may be reduced to reflect the amount for any taxable year by which federal income taxes are greater by reason of the prior use of different methods of depreciation under section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(i) or to reflect asset retirements or the expiration of the period for depreciation used for determining the allowance for depreciation under section 167(a).

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(6)(i) provides that, notwithstanding the provisions of subparagraph (1) of that paragraph, a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes under section 167(l) which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(6)(ii) provides that, for the purpose of determining the maximum amount of the reserve to be excluded from the rate base (or to be included as no-cost capital) under subdivision (i), above, if solely an historical period is used to determine depreciation for Federal income tax expense for ratemaking purposes, then the amount of the reserve account for that period is the amount of the reserve (determined under section 1.167(l)-1(h)(2)(i)) at the end of the historical period. If such determination is made by reference both to an historical portion and to a future portion of a period, the amount of the reserve account for the period is the amount of the

reserve at the end of the historical portion of the period and a pro rata portion of the amount of any projected increase to be credited or decrease to be charged to the account during the future portion of the period.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h) requires that a utility must maintain a reserve reflecting the total amount of the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the taxpayer's use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes. Taxpayer has done so. Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(6)(i) provides that a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking. Section 56(a)(1)(D) provides that, with respect to public utility property the Secretary shall prescribe the requirements of a normalization method of accounting for that section.

Regarding the first issue, § 1.167(l)-1(h)(6)(i) provides that a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking. Because the ADIT account, the reserve account for deferred taxes, reduces rate base, it is clear that the portion of an NOLC that is attributable to accelerated depreciation must be taken into account in calculating the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes (ADIT). Thus, the order by Commission is not in accord with the normalization requirements.

Regarding the second issue, § 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(iii) makes clear that the effects of an NOLC must be taken into account for normalization purposes. Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(iii) provides generally that, if, in respect of any year, the use of other than regulatory depreciation for tax purposes results in an NOLC carryover (or an increase in an NOLC which would not have arisen had the taxpayer claimed only regulatory depreciation for tax purposes), then the amount and time of the deferral of tax liability shall be taken into account in such appropriate time and manner as is satisfactory to the district director. While that section provides no specific mandate on methods, it does provide that the Service has discretion to determine whether a particular method satisfies the normalization requirements. The "with or without" methodology employed by Taxpayer is specifically designed to ensure that the portion of the NOLC attributable to accelerated depreciation is correctly taken into account by maximizing the amount of the NOLC attributable to accelerated depreciation. This methodology provides certainty and prevents the possibility of "flow through" of the benefits of accelerated depreciation to ratepayers. Under these specific facts, any method other than the "with and without"

method would not provide the same level of certainty and therefore the use of any other methodology is inconsistent with the normalization rules.

Regarding the third issue, assignment of a zero rate of return to the balance of Taxpayer's NOLC-related account balance would, in effect, flow the tax benefits of accelerated depreciation deductions through to rate payers. This would violate the normalization provisions.

We rule as follows:

1. Under the circumstances described above, the reduction of Taxpayer's rate base by the full amount of its ADIT account balance unreduced by the balance of its NOLC-related account balance would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1 of the Income Tax regulations.
2. For purposes of Ruling 1 above, the use of a balance of Taxpayer's NOLC-related account balance that is less than the amount attributable to accelerated depreciation computed on a "with and without" basis would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1 of the Income Tax regulations.
3. Under the circumstances described above, the assignment of a zero rate of return to the balance of Taxpayer's NOLC-related account balance would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1.

This ruling is based on the representations submitted by Taxpayer and is only valid if those representations are accurate. The accuracy of these representations is subject to verification on audit.

Except as specifically determined above, no opinion is expressed or implied concerning the Federal income tax consequences of the matters described above.

This ruling is directed only to the taxpayer who requested it. Section 6110(k)(3) of the Code provides it may not be used or cited as precedent. In accordance with the power of attorney on file with this office, a copy of this letter is being sent to your authorized representative. We are also sending a copy of this letter ruling to the Director.

Sincerely,

Peter C. Friedman
Senior Technician Reviewer, Branch 6
Office of the Associate Chief Counsel
(Passthroughs & Special Industries)

Internal Revenue Service

Department of the Treasury
Washington, DC 20224

Number: **201534001**
Release Date: 8/21/2015
Index Number: 167.22-01

Third Party Communication: None
Date of Communication: Not Applicable

Person To Contact:
, ID No.

Telephone Number:

Refer Reply To:
CC:PSI:B06
PLR-103300-15

Date:
May 13, 2015

LEGEND:

- Taxpayer =
- State A =
- State B =
- State C =
- Commission =
- Year A =
- Year B =
- Date A =
- Date B =
- Date C =
- Date D =
- Case =
- Director =

Dear :

This letter responds to the request, dated January 9, 2015, submitted on behalf of Taxpayer for a ruling on the application of the normalization rules of the Internal Revenue Code to certain accounting and regulatory procedures, described below.

The representations set out in your letter follow.

Taxpayer is the common parent of an affiliated group of corporations and is incorporated under the laws of State A and State B. Taxpayer is engaged primarily in the businesses of regulated natural gas distribution, regulated natural gas transmission, and regulated natural gas storage. Taxpayer's regulated natural gas distribution

business delivers gas to customers in several states, including State A. Taxpayer is subject to, as relevant for this ruling, the regulatory jurisdiction of Commission with respect to terms and conditions of service and as to the rates it may charge for the provision of its gas distribution service in State A. Taxpayer's rates are established on a "rate of return" basis.

Taxpayer filed a rate case application on Date A (Case). In its filing, Taxpayer's application was based on a fully forecasted test period consisting of the twelve months ending on Date B. Taxpayer updated, amended, and supplemented its data several times during the course of the proceedings. In a final order dated Date C, rates were approved by Commission for service rendered on or after Date D.

In each year from Year A to Year B, Taxpayer incurred a net operating loss carryforward (NOLC). In each of these years, Taxpayer claimed accelerated depreciation, including "bonus depreciation" on its tax returns to the extent that such depreciation was available. On its regulatory books of account, Taxpayer "normalizes" the differences between regulatory depreciation and tax depreciation. This means that, where accelerated depreciation reduces taxable income, the taxes that a taxpayer would have paid if regulatory depreciation (instead of accelerated tax depreciation) were claimed constitute "cost-free capital" to the taxpayer. A taxpayer that normalizes these differences, like Taxpayer, maintains a reserve account showing the amount of tax liability that is deferred as a result of the accelerated depreciation. This reserve is the accumulated deferred income tax (ADIT) account. Taxpayer maintains an ADIT account. In addition, Taxpayer maintains an offsetting series of entries – a "deferred tax asset" and a "deferred tax expense" - that reflect that portion of those 'tax losses' which, while due to accelerated depreciation, did not actually defer tax because of the existence of an NOLC.

In the setting of utility rates in State C, a utility's rate base is offset by its ADIT balance. In its rate case filing and throughout the proceeding, Taxpayer maintained that the ADIT balance should be reduced by the amounts that Taxpayer calculates did not actually defer tax due to the presence of the NOLC, as represented in the deferred tax asset account. Thus, Taxpayer argued that the rate base should be reduced by its federal ADIT balance net of the deferred tax asset account attributable to the federal NOLC. It also asserted that the failure to reduce its rate base offset by the deferred tax asset attributable to the federal NOLC would be inconsistent with the normalization rules. The attorney general for State C argued against Taxpayer's proposed calculation of ADIT.

Commission, in its final order, agreed with Taxpayer but concluded that the ambiguity in the relevant normalization regulations warranted an assessment of the issue by the IRS and this ruling request followed.

Taxpayer requests that we rule as follows:

1. Under the circumstances described above, the reduction of Taxpayer's rate base by the full amount of its ADIT account balance unreduced by the balance of its NOLC-related account balance would be inconsistent with (and, hence, violative of) the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1 of the Income Tax regulations.
2. For purposes of Ruling 1 above, the use of a balance of Taxpayer's NOLC-related account that is less than the amount attributable to accelerated depreciation computed on a "last dollars deducted" basis would be inconsistent with (and, hence, violative of) the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1 of the Income Tax regulations.

Law and Analysis

Section 168(f)(2) of the Code provides that the depreciation deduction determined under section 168 shall not apply to any public utility property (within the meaning of section 168(i)(10)) if the taxpayer does not use a normalization method of accounting.

In order to use a normalization method of accounting, section 168(i)(9)(A)(i) of the Code requires the taxpayer, in computing its tax expense for establishing its cost of service for ratemaking purposes and reflecting operating results in its regulated books of account, to use a method of depreciation with respect to public utility property that is the same as, and a depreciation period for such property that is not shorter than, the method and period used to compute its depreciation expense for such purposes. Under section 168(i)(9)(A)(ii), if the amount allowable as a deduction under section 168 differs from the amount that would be allowable as a deduction under section 167 using the method, period, first and last year convention, and salvage value used to compute regulated tax expense under section 168(i)(9)(A)(i), the taxpayer must make adjustments to a reserve to reflect the deferral of taxes resulting from such difference.

Section 168(i)(9)(B)(i) of the Code provides that one way the requirements of section 168(i)(9)(A) will not be satisfied is if the taxpayer, for ratemaking purposes, uses a procedure or adjustment which is inconsistent with such requirements. Under section 168(i)(9)(B)(ii), such inconsistent procedures and adjustments include the use of an estimate or projection of the taxpayer's tax expense, depreciation expense, or reserve for deferred taxes under section 168(i)(9)(A)(ii), unless such estimate or projection is also used, for ratemaking purposes, with respect to all three of these items and with respect to the rate base.

Former section 167(l) of the Code generally provided that public utilities were entitled to use accelerated methods for depreciation if they used a "normalization method of accounting." A normalization method of accounting was defined in former section 167(l)(3)(G) in a manner consistent with that found in section 168(i)(9)(A). Section 1.167(l)-1(a)(1) of the Income Tax Regulations provides that the normalization requirements for public utility property pertain only to the deferral of federal income tax

liability resulting from the use of an accelerated method of depreciation for computing the allowance for depreciation under section 167 and the use of straight-line depreciation for computing tax expense and depreciation expense for purposes of establishing cost of services and for reflecting operating results in regulated books of account. These regulations do not pertain to other book-tax timing differences with respect to state income taxes, F.I.C.A. taxes, construction costs, or any other taxes and items.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(i) provides that the reserve established for public utility property should reflect the total amount of the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the taxpayer's use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(iii) provides that the amount of federal income tax liability deferred as a result of the use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes is the excess (computed without regard to credits) of the amount the tax liability would have been had the depreciation method for ratemaking purposes been used over the amount of the actual tax liability. This amount shall be taken into account for the taxable year in which the different methods of depreciation are used. If, however, in respect of any taxable year the use of a method of depreciation other than a subsection (1) method for purposes of determining the taxpayer's reasonable allowance under section 167(a) results in a net operating loss carryover to a year succeeding such taxable year which would not have arisen (or an increase in such carryover which would not have arisen) had the taxpayer determined his reasonable allowance under section 167(a) using a subsection (1) method, then the amount and time of the deferral of tax liability shall be taken into account in such appropriate time and manner as is satisfactory to the district director.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(2)(i) provides that the taxpayer must credit this amount of deferred taxes to a reserve for deferred taxes, a depreciation reserve, or other reserve account. This regulation further provides that, with respect to any account, the aggregate amount allocable to deferred tax under section 167(1) shall not be reduced except to reflect the amount for any taxable year by which Federal income taxes are greater by reason of the prior use of different methods of depreciation. That section also notes that the aggregate amount allocable to deferred taxes may be reduced to reflect the amount for any taxable year by which federal income taxes are greater by reason of the prior use of different methods of depreciation under section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(i) or to reflect asset retirements or the expiration of the period for depreciation used for determining the allowance for depreciation under section 167(a).

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(6)(i) provides that, notwithstanding the provisions of subparagraph (1) of that paragraph, a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes under section 167(l) which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which

the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(6)(ii) provides that, for the purpose of determining the maximum amount of the reserve to be excluded from the rate base (or to be included as no-cost capital) under subdivision (i), above, if solely an historical period is used to determine depreciation for Federal income tax expense for ratemaking purposes, then the amount of the reserve account for that period is the amount of the reserve (determined under section 1.167(l)-1(h)(2)(i)) at the end of the historical period. If such determination is made by reference both to an historical portion and to a future portion of a period, the amount of the reserve account for the period is the amount of the reserve at the end of the historical portion of the period and a pro rata portion of the amount of any projected increase to be credited or decrease to be charged to the account during the future portion of the period.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h) requires that a utility must maintain a reserve reflecting the total amount of the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the taxpayer's use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes. Taxpayer has done so. Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(6)(i) provides that a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking. Section 56(a)(1)(D) provides that, with respect to public utility property the Secretary shall prescribe the requirements of a normalization method of accounting for that section.

Regarding the first issue, § 1.167(l)-1(h)(6)(i) provides that a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking. Because the ADIT account, the reserve account for deferred taxes, reduces rate base, it is clear that the portion of an NOLC that is attributable to accelerated depreciation must be taken into account in calculating the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes (ADIT). Thus, to reduce Taxpayer's rate base by the full amount of its ADIT account balance unreduced by the balance of its NOLC-related account balance would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1.

Regarding the second issue, § 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(iii) makes clear that the effects of an NOLC must be taken into account for normalization purposes. Section 1.167(l)-

1(h)(1)(iii) provides generally that, if, in respect of any year, the use of other than regulatory depreciation for tax purposes results in an NOLC carryover (or an increase in an NOLC which would not have arisen had the taxpayer claimed only regulatory depreciation for tax purposes), then the amount and time of the deferral of tax liability shall be taken into account in such appropriate time and manner as is satisfactory to the district director. While that section provides no specific mandate on methods, it does provide that the Service has discretion to determine whether a particular method satisfies the normalization requirements. The “last dollars deducted” methodology employed by Taxpayer ensures that the portion of the NOLC attributable to accelerated depreciation is correctly taken into account by maximizing the amount of the NOLC attributable to accelerated depreciation. This methodology provides certainty and prevents the possibility of “flow through” of the benefits of accelerated depreciation to ratepayers. Under these specific facts, any method other than the “last dollars deducted” method would not provide the same level of certainty and therefore the use of any other methodology is inconsistent with the normalization rules.

This ruling is based on the representations submitted by Taxpayer and is only valid if those representations are accurate. The accuracy of these representations is subject to verification on audit.

Except as specifically determined above, no opinion is expressed or implied concerning the Federal income tax consequences of the matters described above.

This ruling is directed only to the taxpayer who requested it. Section 6110(k)(3) of the Code provides it may not be used or cited as precedent. In accordance with the power of attorney on file with this office, a copy of this letter is being sent to your authorized representative. We are also sending a copy of this letter ruling to the Director.

Sincerely,

Peter C. Friedman
Senior Technician Reviewer, Branch 6
Office of the Associate Chief Counsel
(Passthroughs & Special Industries)

cc:

Internal Revenue Service

Department of the Treasury
Washington, DC 20224

Number: **201548017**
Release Date: 11/27/2015
Index Number: 167.22-01

Third Party Communication: None
Date of Communication: Not Applicable

Person To Contact:
, ID No.

Telephone Number:

Refer Reply To:
CC:PSI:B06
PLR-116998-15

Date:
August 19, 2015

LEGEND:

Taxpayer =
Parent =
State A =
State B =
Commission =
Year A =
Year B =
Date A =
Date B =
Case =
Director =

Dear :

This letter responds to the request, dated May 14, 2015, of Taxpayer for a ruling on the application of the normalization rules of the Internal Revenue Code to certain accounting and regulatory procedures, described below.

The representations set out in your letter follow.

Taxpayer is primarily engaged in the regulated distribution of natural gas in State A. It is incorporated in State B and is wholly owned by Parent. Taxpayer is subject to the regulatory jurisdiction of Commission with respect to terms and conditions of service

and particularly the rates it may charge for the provision of service. Taxpayer's rates are established on a rate of return basis. Taxpayer takes accelerated depreciation, including "bonus depreciation" where available and, for each year beginning in Year A and ending in Year B, Taxpayer incurred net operating losses (NOL). On its regulatory books of account, Taxpayer "normalizes" the differences between regulatory depreciation and tax depreciation. This means that, where accelerated depreciation reduces taxable income, the taxes that a taxpayer would have paid if regulatory depreciation (instead of accelerated tax depreciation) were claimed constitute "cost-free capital" to the taxpayer. A taxpayer that normalizes these differences, like Taxpayer, maintains a reserve account showing the amount of tax liability that is deferred as a result of the accelerated depreciation. This reserve is the accumulated deferred income tax (ADIT) account. Taxpayer maintains an ADIT account. In addition, Taxpayer maintains an offsetting series of entries – a "deferred tax asset" and a "deferred tax expense" - that reflect that portion of those 'tax losses' which, while due to accelerated depreciation, did not actually defer tax because of the existence of an net operating loss carryover (NOLC). Taxpayer, for normalization purposes, calculates the portion of the NOLC attributable to accelerated depreciation using a "last dollars deducted" methodology, meaning that an NOLC is attributable to accelerated depreciation to the extent of the lesser of the accelerated depreciation or the NOLC.

Taxpayer filed a general rate case with Commission on Date A (Case). The test year used in the Case was the 12 month period ending on Date B. In computing its income tax expense element of cost of service, the tax benefits attributable to accelerated depreciation were normalized in accordance with Commission policy and were not flowed thru to ratepayers. In establishing the rate base on which Taxpayer was to be allowed to earn a return Commission offsets rate base by Taxpayer's ADIT balance. Taxpayer argued that the ADIT balance should be reduced by the amounts that Taxpayer calculates did not actually defer tax due to the presence of the NOLC, as represented in the deferred tax asset account. Testimony by various other participants in Case argued against Taxpayer's proposed calculation of ADIT. One proposal made to Commission was, if Commission allowed Taxpayer to reduce the ADIT balance as Taxpayer proposed, then an offsetting reduction should be made to Taxpayer's income tax expense element of service.

A Utility Law Judge upheld Taxpayer's position with respect to the NOLC-related ADIT and ordered Taxpayer to seek a ruling from the Internal Revenue Service on this matter. This request is in response to that order.

Taxpayer requests that we rule as follows:

1. Under the circumstances described above, the reduction of Taxpayer's rate base by the balance of its ADIT accounts unreduced by its NOLC-related deferred tax account would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1 of the Income Tax regulations.

2. Under the circumstances described above, the reduction of Taxpayer's rate base by the full amount of its ADIT account balances offset by a portion of its NOLC-related account balance that is less than the amount attributable to accelerated depreciation computed on a "last dollars deducted" basis would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1.
3. Under the circumstances described above, any reduction in Taxpayer's tax expense element of cost of service to reflect the tax benefit of its NOLC would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1.

Law and Analysis

Section 168(f)(2) of the Code provides that the depreciation deduction determined under section 168 shall not apply to any public utility property (within the meaning of section 168(i)(10)) if the taxpayer does not use a normalization method of accounting.

In order to use a normalization method of accounting, section 168(i)(9)(A)(i) of the Code requires the taxpayer, in computing its tax expense for establishing its cost of service for ratemaking purposes and reflecting operating results in its regulated books of account, to use a method of depreciation with respect to public utility property that is the same as, and a depreciation period for such property that is not shorter than, the method and period used to compute its depreciation expense for such purposes. Under section 168(i)(9)(A)(ii), if the amount allowable as a deduction under section 168 differs from the amount that would be allowable as a deduction under section 167 using the method, period, first and last year convention, and salvage value used to compute regulated tax expense under section 168(i)(9)(A)(i), the taxpayer must make adjustments to a reserve to reflect the deferral of taxes resulting from such difference.

Section 168(i)(9)(B)(i) of the Code provides that one way the requirements of section 168(i)(9)(A) will not be satisfied is if the taxpayer, for ratemaking purposes, uses a procedure or adjustment which is inconsistent with such requirements. Under section 168(i)(9)(B)(ii), such inconsistent procedures and adjustments include the use of an estimate or projection of the taxpayer's tax expense, depreciation expense, or reserve for deferred taxes under section 168(i)(9)(A)(ii), unless such estimate or projection is also used, for ratemaking purposes, with respect to all three of these items and with respect to the rate base.

Former section 167(l) of the Code generally provided that public utilities were entitled to use accelerated methods for depreciation if they used a "normalization method of accounting." A normalization method of accounting was defined in former section 167(l)(3)(G) in a manner consistent with that found in section 168(i)(9)(A). Section 1.167(1)-1(a)(1) of the Income Tax Regulations provides that the normalization requirements for public utility property pertain only to the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the use of an accelerated method of depreciation for computing

the allowance for depreciation under section 167 and the use of straight-line depreciation for computing tax expense and depreciation expense for purposes of establishing cost of services and for reflecting operating results in regulated books of account. These regulations do not pertain to other book-tax timing differences with respect to state income taxes, F.I.C.A. taxes, construction costs, or any other taxes and items.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(i) provides that the reserve established for public utility property should reflect the total amount of the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the taxpayer's use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes.

Section 1.167(1)-1(h)(1)(iii) provides that the amount of federal income tax liability deferred as a result of the use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes is the excess (computed without regard to credits) of the amount the tax liability would have been had the depreciation method for ratemaking purposes been used over the amount of the actual tax liability. This amount shall be taken into account for the taxable year in which the different methods of depreciation are used. If, however, in respect of any taxable year the use of a method of depreciation other than a subsection (1) method for purposes of determining the taxpayer's reasonable allowance under section 167(a) results in a net operating loss carryover to a year succeeding such taxable year which would not have arisen (or an increase in such carryover which would not have arisen) had the taxpayer determined his reasonable allowance under section 167(a) using a subsection (1) method, then the amount and time of the deferral of tax liability shall be taken into account in such appropriate time and manner as is satisfactory to the district director.

Section 1.167(1)-1(h)(2)(i) provides that the taxpayer must credit this amount of deferred taxes to a reserve for deferred taxes, a depreciation reserve, or other reserve account. This regulation further provides that, with respect to any account, the aggregate amount allocable to deferred tax under section 167(1) shall not be reduced except to reflect the amount for any taxable year by which Federal income taxes are greater by reason of the prior use of different methods of depreciation. That section also notes that the aggregate amount allocable to deferred taxes may be reduced to reflect the amount for any taxable year by which federal income taxes are greater by reason of the prior use of different methods of depreciation under section 1.167(1)-1(h)(1)(i) or to reflect asset retirements or the expiration of the period for depreciation used for determining the allowance for depreciation under section 167(a).

Section 1.167(1)-(h)(6)(i) provides that, notwithstanding the provisions of subparagraph (1) of that paragraph, a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes under section 167(l) which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which

the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking.

Section 1.167(1)-(h)(6)(ii) provides that, for the purpose of determining the maximum amount of the reserve to be excluded from the rate base (or to be included as no-cost capital) under subdivision (i), above, if solely an historical period is used to determine depreciation for Federal income tax expense for ratemaking purposes, then the amount of the reserve account for that period is the amount of the reserve (determined under section 1.167(1)-1(h)(2)(i)) at the end of the historical period. If such determination is made by reference both to an historical portion and to a future portion of a period, the amount of the reserve account for the period is the amount of the reserve at the end of the historical portion of the period and a pro rata portion of the amount of any projected increase to be credited or decrease to be charged to the account during the future portion of the period.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h) requires that a utility must maintain a reserve reflecting the total amount of the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the taxpayer's use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes. Taxpayer has done so. Section 1.167(1)-(h)(6)(i) provides that a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking. Section 56(a)(1)(D) provides that, with respect to public utility property the Secretary shall prescribe the requirements of a normalization method of accounting for that section.

Section 1.167(1)-1(h)(1)(iii) makes clear that the effects of an NOLC must be taken into account for normalization purposes. Further, while that section provides no specific mandate on methods, it does provide that the Service has discretion to determine whether a particular method satisfies the normalization requirements. Section 1.167(1)-(h)(6)(i) provides that a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking. Because the ADIT account, the reserve account for deferred taxes, reduces rate base, it is clear that the portion of an NOLC that is attributable to accelerated depreciation must be taken into account in calculating the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes (ADIT). Thus, the proposed order by the Utility Law Judge upholding Taxpayer's position that the NOLC-related deferred tax account

must be included in the calculation of Taxpayer's ADIT is in accord with the normalization requirements. The "last dollars deducted" methodology employed by Taxpayer is specifically designed to ensure that the portion of the NOLC attributable to accelerated depreciation is correctly taken into account by maximizing the amount of the NOLC attributable to accelerated depreciation. This methodology provides certainty and prevents the possibility of "flow through" of the benefits of accelerated depreciation to ratepayers. Under these facts, any method other than the "last dollars deducted" method would not provide the same level of certainty and therefore the use of any other methodology is inconsistent with the normalization rules.

Regarding the third issue, reduction of Taxpayer's tax expense element of cost of service, we believe that such reduction would, in effect, flow through the tax benefits of accelerated depreciation deductions through to rate payers even though the Taxpayer has not yet realized such benefits. In addition, such adjustment would be made specifically to mitigate the effect of the normalization rules in the calculation of Taxpayer's NOLC-related ADIT. In general, taxpayers may not adopt any accounting treatment that directly or indirectly circumvents the normalization rules. See generally, § 1.46-6(b)(2)(ii) (In determining whether, or to what extent, the investment tax credit has been used to reduce cost of service, reference shall be made to any accounting treatment that affects cost of service); Rev. Proc 88-12, 1988-1 C.B. 637, 638 (It is a violation of the normalization rules for taxpayers to adopt any accounting treatment that, directly or indirectly flows excess tax reserves to ratepayers prior to the time that the amounts in the vintage accounts reverse). This "offsetting reduction" would violate the normalization provisions.

Based on the representations submitted by Taxpayer, we rule as follows:

1. Under the circumstances described above, the reduction of Taxpayer's rate base by the balance of its ADIT accounts unreduced by its NOLC-related deferred tax account would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1 of the Income Tax regulations.
2. Under the circumstances described above, the reduction of Taxpayer's rate base by the full amount of its ADIT account balances offset by a portion of its NOLC-related account balance that is less than the amount attributable to accelerated depreciation computed on a "last dollars deducted" basis would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1.
3. Under the circumstances described above, any reduction in Taxpayer's tax expense element of cost of service to reflect the tax benefit of its NOLC would be inconsistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1.

Except as specifically determined above, no opinion is expressed or implied concerning the Federal income tax consequences of the matters described above.

This ruling is directed only to the taxpayer who requested it. Section 6110(k)(3) of the Code provides it may not be used or cited as precedent. In accordance with the power of attorney on file with this office, a copy of this letter is being sent to your authorized representative. We are also sending a copy of this letter ruling to the Director.

Sincerely,

Peter C. Friedman
Senior Technician Reviewer, Branch 6
Office of Associate Chief Counsel
(Passthroughs & Special Industries)

cc:

Internal Revenue Service

Department of the Treasury
Washington, DC 20224

Number: **201709008**
Release Date: 3/3/2017
Index Number: 167.22-01

Third Party Communication: None
Date of Communication: Not Applicable

Person To Contact:
, ID No.

Telephone Number:

Refer Reply To:
CC:PSI:B06
PLR-119381-16
Date:
December 02, 2016

LEGEND:

- Taxpayer =
- Parent =
- State =
- Commission A =
- Commission B =
- Date 1 =
- Date 2 =
- Date 3 =
- Date 4 =
- Date 5 =
- Case =
- Year 1 =
- Year 2 =
- Director =

Dear :

This letter responds to the request, dated June 15, 2016, submitted by Parent on behalf of Taxpayer for a ruling on the application of the normalization rules of the Internal Revenue Code to certain accounting and regulatory procedures, described below.

The representations set out in your letter follow.

Taxpayer is an integrated electric utility headquartered in State. Taxpayer is a wholly owned subsidiary of Parent and is included in Parent’s consolidated federal income tax return. Taxpayer employs the accrual method of accounting and reports on a calendar year basis.

Taxpayer’s business includes retail electric utility operations regulated within State by Commission A and Taxpayer is subject to the regulatory jurisdiction of Commission B with respect to terms and conditions of its wholesale electric

transmission service and as to the rates it may charge for the provision of such services. Taxpayer's rates are established on a cost of service basis.

On Date 1, Taxpayer filed a rate case application (Case) with Commission B requesting authorization to change from charging stated rates for wholesale electric transmission service to a formula rate mechanism pursuant to which rates for wholesale transmission service are calculated annually in accordance with an approved formula. The proposed formula consisted of updating cost of service components, including investment in plant and operating expenses, based on information contained in Taxpayer's annual financial report filed with Commission B, as well as including projected transmission capital projects to be placed into service in the following year. The projections included are subject to true-up in the following year's formula rate.

In computing its income tax expense element of cost of service, the tax benefits attributable to accelerated depreciation were normalized and were not flowed thru to ratepayers.

In its rate case filing, Taxpayer anticipated that it would claim accelerated depreciation, including "bonus depreciation" on its tax returns to the extent that such depreciation was available. Taxpayer incurred a net operating loss (NOL) in each of Year 1 through Year 2 due to Taxpayer's claiming bonus depreciation, producing a net operating loss carryover (NOLC).

On its regulatory books of account, Taxpayer "normalizes" the differences between regulatory depreciation and tax depreciation. This means that, where accelerated depreciation reduces taxable income, the taxes that a taxpayer would have paid if regulatory depreciation (instead of accelerated tax depreciation) were claimed constitute "cost-free capital" to the taxpayer. A taxpayer that normalizes these differences, like Taxpayer, maintains a reserve account showing the amount of tax liability that is deferred as a result of the accelerated depreciation. This reserve is the accumulated deferred income tax (ADIT) account. Taxpayer maintains an ADIT account. In addition, Taxpayer maintains an offsetting series of entries – a "deferred tax asset" and a "deferred tax expense" – that reflect that portion of those 'tax losses' which, while due to accelerated depreciation, did not actually defer tax because of the existence of a NOLC.

In the setting of utility rates by Commission B, a utility's rate base is offset by its ADIT balance. In its rate case filing, Taxpayer maintained that the ADIT balance should be reduced by the amounts that Taxpayer calculates did not actually defer tax due to the presence of the NOLC, as represented in the deferred tax asset account. Thus, Taxpayer argued that the rate base should be reduced by its federal ADIT balance net of the deferred tax asset account attributable to the federal NOLC. It based this position on its determination that this net amount represented the true measure of federal income taxes deferred on account of its claiming accelerated tax depreciation

deductions and, consequently, the actual quantity of “cost-free” capital available to it. It also asserted that the failure to reduce its rate base offset by the deferred tax asset attributable to the federal NOLC would be inconsistent with the normalization rules.

On Date 2, Commission B issued an order accepting Taxpayer’s revisions to its rates. On Date 3, new rates went into effect, subject to refund. Several intervenors submitted challenges to the rate case and on Date 4, Taxpayer and those intervenors entered into a Settlement Agreement, which was filed with Commission B. On Date 5, Commission B issued an order accepting the Settlement Agreement, which allows for the inclusion of the ADIT related to the NOLC asset in rate base.

Commission B further stated in the order that it is the intent of Commission B that Taxpayer comply with the normalization method of accounting and tax normalization regulations. The order also requires Taxpayer to seek a private letter ruling (PLR) from the Service regarding Taxpayer’s treatment of the ADIT related to the NOLC asset. Commission B also noted that after the Service issues a PLR, Taxpayer shall adjust, to the extent necessary, its ratemaking treatment of the ADIT related to the NOLC asset prospectively from the date of the PLR.

Taxpayer requests that we rule as follows:

1. In order to avoid a violation of the normalization requirements of § 168(i)(9) and Treasury Regulation § 1.167(l)-1, it is necessary to include in rate base the Accumulated Deferred Income Tax (ADIT) asset resulting from the Net Operating Loss Carryforward (NOLC), given the inclusion in rate base of the full amount of the ADIT liability resulting from accelerated tax depreciation.
2. The exclusion from rate base of the entire ADIT asset resulting from the NOLC, or the inclusion in rate base of a portion of that ADIT asset that is less than the amount attributable to accelerated tax depreciation, computed on a “with and without” basis, would violate the normalization requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1.

Law and Analysis

Section 168(f)(2) of the Code provides that the depreciation deduction determined under § 168 shall not apply to any public utility property (within the meaning of § 168(i)(10)) if the taxpayer does not use a normalization method of accounting.

In order to use a normalization method of accounting, § 168(i)(9)(A)(i) requires the taxpayer, in computing its tax expense for establishing its cost of service for ratemaking purposes and reflecting operating results in its regulated books of account, to use a method of depreciation with respect to public utility property that is the same as, and a depreciation period for such property that is not shorter than, the method and period used to compute its depreciation expense for such purposes. Under

§ 168(i)(9)(A)(ii), if the amount allowable as a deduction under § 168 differs from the amount that would be allowable as a deduction under § 167 using the method, period, first and last year convention, and salvage value used to compute regulated tax expense under § 168(i)(9)(A)(i), the taxpayer must make adjustments to a reserve to reflect the deferral of taxes resulting from such difference.

Section 168(i)(9)(B)(i) provides that one way the requirements of § 168(i)(9)(A) will not be satisfied is if the taxpayer, for ratemaking purposes, uses a procedure or adjustment which is inconsistent with such requirements. Under § 168(i)(9)(B)(ii), such inconsistent procedures and adjustments include the use of an estimate or projection of the taxpayer's tax expense, depreciation expense, or reserve for deferred taxes under § 168(i)(9)(A)(ii), unless such estimate or projection is also used, for ratemaking purposes, with respect to all three of these items and with respect to the rate base.

Former § 167(l) generally provided that public utilities were entitled to use accelerated methods for depreciation if they used a "normalization method of accounting." A normalization method of accounting was defined in former § 167(l)(3)(G) in a manner consistent with that found in § 168(i)(9)(A). Section 1.167(l)-1(a)(1) provides that the normalization requirements for public utility property pertain only to the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the use of an accelerated method of depreciation for computing the allowance for depreciation under § 167 and the use of straight-line depreciation for computing tax expense and depreciation expense for purposes of establishing cost of services and for reflecting operating results in regulated books of account. These regulations do not pertain to other book-tax timing differences with respect to state income taxes, F.I.C.A. taxes, construction costs, or any other taxes and items.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(i) provides that the reserve established for public utility property should reflect the total amount of the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the taxpayer's use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(iii) provides that the amount of federal income tax liability deferred as a result of the use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes is the excess (computed without regard to credits) of the amount the tax liability would have been had the depreciation method for ratemaking purposes been used over the amount of the actual tax liability. This amount shall be taken into account for the taxable year in which the different methods of depreciation are used. If, however, in respect of any taxable year the use of a method of depreciation other than a subsection (1) method for purposes of determining the taxpayer's reasonable allowance under § 167(a) results in a net operating loss carryover to a year succeeding such taxable year which would not have arisen (or an increase in such carryover which would not have arisen) had the taxpayer determined his reasonable allowance under § 167(a) using a subsection (1) method, then the amount and time of the deferral of tax liability

shall be taken into account in such appropriate time and manner as is satisfactory to the district director.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(2)(i) provides that the taxpayer must credit this amount of deferred taxes to a reserve for deferred taxes, a depreciation reserve, or other reserve account. This regulation further provides that, with respect to any account, the aggregate amount allocable to deferred tax under § 167(1) shall not be reduced except to reflect the amount for any taxable year by which Federal income taxes are greater by reason of the prior use of different methods of depreciation. That section also notes that the aggregate amount allocable to deferred taxes may be reduced to reflect the amount for any taxable year by which federal income taxes are greater by reason of the prior use of different methods of depreciation under § 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(i) or to reflect asset retirements or the expiration of the period for depreciation used for determining the allowance for depreciation under § 167(a).

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(6)(i) provides that, notwithstanding the provisions of subparagraph (1) of that paragraph, a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes under § 167(l) which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(6)(ii) provides that, for the purpose of determining the maximum amount of the reserve to be excluded from the rate base (or to be included as no-cost capital) under subdivision (i), above, if solely an historical period is used to determine depreciation for Federal income tax expense for ratemaking purposes, then the amount of the reserve account for that period is the amount of the reserve (determined under § 1.167(l)-1(h)(2)(i)) at the end of the historical period. If such determination is made by reference both to an historical portion and to a future portion of a period, the amount of the reserve account for the period is the amount of the reserve at the end of the historical portion of the period and a pro rata portion of the amount of any projected increase to be credited or decrease to be charged to the account during the future portion of the period.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h) requires that a utility must maintain a reserve reflecting the total amount of the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the taxpayer's use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes. Taxpayer has done so. Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(6)(i) provides that a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount

of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking. Section 56(a)(1)(D) provides that, with respect to public utility property the Secretary shall prescribe the requirements of a normalization method of accounting for that section.

Regarding the first issue, § 1.167(l)-1(h)(6)(i) provides that a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking. Because the reserve account for deferred taxes (ADIT), reduces rate base, it is clear that the portion of the net operating loss carryover (NOLC) that is attributable to accelerated depreciation must be taken into account in calculating the amount of the ADIT account balance. Thus, the order by Commission to include in rate base the ADIT asset resulting from the NOLC, given the inclusion in rate base of the full amount of the ADIT liability resulting from accelerated tax depreciation is in accord with the normalization requirements.

Regarding the second issue, § 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(iii) makes clear that the effects of an NOLC must be taken into account for normalization purposes. Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(iii) provides generally that, if, in respect of any year, the use of other than regulatory depreciation for tax purposes results in an NOLC carryover (or an increase in an NOLC which would not have arisen had the taxpayer claimed only regulatory depreciation for tax purposes), then the amount and time of the deferral of tax liability shall be taken into account in such appropriate time and manner as is satisfactory to the district director. The "with or without" methodology employed by Taxpayer is specifically designed to ensure that the portion of the NOLC attributable to accelerated depreciation is correctly taken into account by maximizing the amount of the NOLC attributable to accelerated depreciation. This methodology provides certainty and prevents the possibility of "flow through" of the benefits of accelerated depreciation to ratepayers. Under these specific facts, any method other than the "with or without" method would not provide the same level of certainty and therefore the use of any other methodology in computing the portion of the ADIT asset attributable to accelerated depreciation is inconsistent with the normalization rules.

We rule as follows:

1. In order to avoid a violation of the normalization requirements of § 168(i)(9) and Treasury Regulation § 1.167(l)-1, it is necessary to include in rate base the Accumulated Deferred Income Tax (ADIT) asset resulting from the Net Operating Loss Carryforward (NOLC), given the inclusion in rate base of the full amount of the ADIT liability resulting from accelerated tax depreciation.

2. The exclusion from rate base of the entire ADIT asset resulting from the NOLC, or the inclusion in rate base of a portion of that ADIT asset that is less than the amount attributable to accelerated tax depreciation, computed on a "with and without" basis, would violate the normalization requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1.

This ruling is based on the representations submitted by Taxpayer and is only valid if those representations are accurate. The accuracy of these representations is subject to verification on audit.

Except as specifically determined above, no opinion is expressed or implied concerning the Federal income tax consequences of the matters described above.

This ruling is directed only to the taxpayer who requested it. Section 6110(k)(3) of the Code provides it may not be used or cited as precedent. In accordance with the power of attorney on file with this office, a copy of this letter is being sent to your authorized representative. We are also sending a copy of this letter ruling to the Director.

Sincerely,

Patrick S. Kirwan
Chief, Branch 6
Office of the Associate Chief Counsel
(Passthroughs & Special Industries)

cc:

Internal Revenue Service

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Department of the Treasury
Washington, DC 20224

Third Party Communication: None
Date of Communication: Not Applicable

Person To Contact:
, ID No.

Telephone Number:

Refer Reply To:
CC:PSI:B06
PLR-101912-18

Date:
July 18, 2018

LEGEND

Taxpayer =

Parent =

State A =

State B =

Commission A =

Commission B =

Director =

Year 1 =

Year 2 =

Year 3 =

Date 1 =

Date 2 =

Date 3 =

Date 4 =

Date 5 =

a =

b =

c =

d =

Dear :

This letter responds to a request for a private letter ruling dated November 27, 2017, submitted on behalf of Taxpayer by your authorized representatives. Taxpayer requested a ruling regarding the application of the normalization rules under § 168(i)(9) of the Internal Revenue Code and § 1.167(l)-1 of the Income Tax Regulations (the normalization requirements.) The relevant facts as represented in your submissions are set forth below.

FACTS

Parent is a publicly traded holding company incorporated in State A. Parent is the parent of a group of affiliated companies, which includes Taxpayer, that electronically file a consolidated federal income tax return using an accrual basis of accounting and a calendar year for both tax and financial reporting purposes. Parent is under the audit jurisdiction of LB&I. Taxpayer is a vertically-integrated, cost-based, rate-regulated electric utility, providing retail electric service in State B. Taxpayer is subject to regulation by Commission A with respect to its retail electric rates and by Commission B with respect to its wholesale rates. Taxpayer is a wholly owned subsidiary of Parent.

Parent consolidated group made first and second quarter Year 2 estimated tax payments to the Internal Revenue Service (Service), part of which was Taxpayer's respective share. Parent's Year 1 federal income tax return was filed on Date 1 showing an overpayment which was applied to Year 2 estimated taxes. Part of the Year 1 overpayment was Taxpayer's share causing the Taxpayer's share of the total Year 2 federal estimated tax payments to be in the amount of a (Year 2 ES Payment). As of the filing date of the Year 1 consolidated return and the application of the Year 1 overpayment to Parent group's Year 2 estimated taxes, the additional 50% first year depreciation deduction ("Bonus Depreciation") was not applicable to otherwise qualified property (except long production period property). Accordingly, Taxpayer's Year 2 ES Payment was calculated without regard to Bonus Depreciation for Taxpayer's qualified property placed in service in the Year 2 tax year (other than long production period property).

On December 19, 2014, the Tax Increase Prevention Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-295) (the “2014 Tax Act”) was enacted into law, which, among other things, retroactively extended the option to elect Bonus Depreciation for all qualified property placed in service before January 1, 2014. After the enactment of the 2014 Tax Act, Parent decided that it would elect Bonus Depreciation for the consolidated group’s Year 2 federal income tax return. As a result of its decision to elect Bonus Depreciation for the Year 2 tax year, Taxpayer’s Year 2 ES Payment was in excess of the required amount had Bonus Depreciation not been elected in the amount of b (the Year 2 Tax Overpayment.) On Date 2, Taxpayer filed a refund claim with the Service for the Year 2 Tax Overpayment. Taxpayer recorded entries on its financial books of account that had net effect of not decreasing rate base by the amount of the tax refund claimed but not yet received by Taxpayer.

Taxpayer received a refund of the Year 2 Tax Overpayment from the Service on Date 3.

Similarly, for the Year 3 tax year, Parent consolidated group made first and second quarter Year 3 estimated tax payments to the Service, part of which was Taxpayer’s respective share. Taxpayer’s share of the total Year 3 federal estimated tax payments was in the amount of c (the Year 3 ES Payment). Similar to what occurred in the previous year, as of the filing date of the Year 2 consolidated return and the application of the Year 2 overpayment to Parent group’s Year 3 estimated taxes, Bonus Depreciation was not applicable to otherwise qualified property (except long production period property). Accordingly, Taxpayer’s Year 3 ES Payment was calculated without regard to Bonus Depreciation for Taxpayer’s qualified property placed in service in the Year 3 tax year (other than long production period property.)

On December 18, 2015, the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes (PATH) Act of 2015 (P.L. 114-113) (the “2015 Tax Act”) was enacted into law, which, among other things, retroactively extended the option to elect Bonus Depreciation for all qualified property placed in service before January 1, 2016. After the enactment of the 2015 Tax Act, Parent decided that it would elect Bonus Depreciation for the consolidated group’s Year 3 federal income tax return. As a result of its decision to elect Bonus Depreciation for the Year 3 tax year, Taxpayer’s Year 3 ES Payment was in excess of the required amount had Bonus Depreciation not been elected in the amount of d (the Year 3 Tax Overpayment.) On Date 4, Taxpayer filed a refund claim with the Service for the Year 3 Tax Overpayment.). Taxpayer recorded entries on its financial books of account had the net effect of not decreasing rate base by the amount of the tax refund claimed but not yet received by Taxpayer.

Taxpayer received a refund of the Year 3 Tax Overpayment from the Service on Date 5.

RULING REQUESTED

A net reduction of rate base by means of including in Taxpayer's ADIT Account tax benefits resulting from timing differences due to depreciation that have not yet been received by Taxpayer and are not offset by a corresponding regulatory asset does not comply with the normalization requirements.

LAW AND ANALYSIS

Section 168(f)(2) of the Code provides that the depreciation deduction determined under § 168 shall not apply to any public utility property (within the meaning of § 168(i)(10)) if the taxpayer does not use a normalization method of accounting.

In order to use a normalization method of accounting, § 168(i)(9)(A) requires that a taxpayer, in computing its tax expense for establishing its cost of service for ratemaking purposes and reflecting operating results in its regulated books of account, to use a method of depreciation with respect to public utility property that is the same as, and a depreciation period for such property that is not shorter than, the method and period used to compute its depreciation expense for such purposes. Under § 168(i)(9)(A)(ii), if the amount allowable as a deduction under § 168 differs from the amount that would be allowable as a deduction under § 167 using the method, period, first and last year convention, and salvage value used to compute regulated tax expense under § 168(i)(9)(A)(i), the taxpayer must make adjustments to a reserve to reflect the deferral of taxes resulting from such difference.

Section 168(i)(9)(B)(i) provides that one way the requirements of § 168(i)(9)(A) will not be satisfied is if the taxpayer, for ratemaking purposes, uses a procedure or adjustment which is inconsistent with such requirements. Under § 168(i)(9)(B)(ii), such inconsistent procedures and adjustments include the use of an estimate or projection of the taxpayer's tax expense, depreciation expense, or reserve for deferred taxes under § 168(i)(9)(A)(ii), unless such estimate or projection is also used, for ratemaking purposes, with respect to all three of these items and with respect to the rate base (hereinafter referred to as the "Consistency Rule").

Former § 167(l) generally provided that public utilities were entitled to use accelerated methods for depreciation if they used a "normalization method of accounting." A normalization method of accounting was defined in former § 167(l)(3)(G) in a manner consistent with that found in § 168(i)(9)(A). Section 1.167(l)-1(a)(1) provides that the normalization requirements for public utility property pertain only to the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the use of an accelerated method of depreciation for computing the allowance for depreciation under § 167 and the use of straight-line depreciation for computing tax expense and depreciation expense for purposes of establishing cost of services and for reflecting operating results in regulated

books of account. These regulations do not pertain to other book-tax timing differences with respect to state income taxes, F.I.C.A. taxes, construction costs, or any other taxes and items.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(i) provides that the reserve established for public utility property should reflect the total amount of the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the taxpayer's use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(iii) provides that the amount of federal income tax liability deferred as a result of the use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes is the excess (computed without regard to credits) of the amount the tax liability would have been had the depreciation method for ratemaking purposes been used over the amount of the actual tax liability. This amount shall be taken into account for the taxable year in which the different methods of depreciation are used. If, however, in respect of any taxable year the use of a method of depreciation other than a subsection (1) method for purposes of determining the taxpayer's reasonable allowance under section 167(a) results in a net operating loss carryover (NOLC) to a year succeeding such taxable year which would not have arisen (or an increase in such carryover which would not have arisen) had the taxpayer determined his reasonable allowance under section 167(a) using a subsection (1) method, then the amount and time of the deferral of tax liability shall be taken into account in such appropriate time and manner as is satisfactory to the district director.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(2)(i) provides that the taxpayer must credit this amount of deferred taxes to a reserve for deferred taxes, a depreciation reserve, or other reserve account. This regulation further provides that, with respect to any account, the aggregate amount allocable to deferred tax under section 167(1) shall not be reduced except to reflect the amount for any taxable year by which Federal income taxes are greater by reason of the prior use of different methods of depreciation. That section also notes that the aggregate amount allocable to deferred taxes may be reduced to reflect the amount for any taxable year by which federal income taxes are greater by reason of the prior use of different methods of depreciation under section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(i) or to reflect asset retirements or the expiration of the period for depreciation used for determining the allowance for depreciation under section 167(a).

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(6)(i) provides that, notwithstanding the provisions of subparagraph (1) of that paragraph, a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes under section 167(l) which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking.

Similar to a taxpayer that must take into account the portion of a NOLC that is attributable to accelerated depreciation in calculating the amount of the ADIT under § 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(iii), a taxpayer's reserve for deferred taxes for normalization purposes should include only amounts of tax that are actually deferred and amounts of zero-cost capital that are actually received. In this case, prior to the Service refunding the Year 2 Tax Overpayment and Year 3 Tax Overpayment, these were not in the possession of the Taxpayer. Taxpayer used different regulatory accounts to reflect the tax refund claimed but not yet received in Year 2 and Year 3; in both years, however, the net effect of the entries was to not reduce Taxpayer's rate base by the amount of the refund claimed but not yet received. A net reduction of rate base by means of including in Taxpayer's ADIT Account tax benefits resulting from timing differences due to depreciation that have not yet been received by Taxpayer and are not offset by a corresponding regulatory asset does not comply with the normalization requirements.

Except as specifically set forth above, no opinion is expressed or implied concerning the federal income tax consequences of the above described facts under any other provision of the Code or regulations.

This ruling is directed only to the taxpayer who requested it. Section 6110(k)(3) of the Code provides it may not be used or cited as precedent.

This ruling is based upon information and representations submitted by Taxpayer and accompanied by penalty of perjury statements executed by an appropriate party. While this office has not verified any of the material submitted in support of the request for rulings, it is subject to verification on examination.

In accordance with the power of attorney on file with this office, a copy of this letter is being sent to your authorized representative. We are also sending a copy of this letter ruling to Director.

Sincerely,

Patrick S. Kirwan

Patrick S. Kirwan
Chief, Branch 6
Office of Associate Chief Counsel
(Passthroughs & Special Industries)

Tax (ADIT) account balance in the context of a rate case is consistent with the requirements of the normalization provisions of the Internal Revenue Code.

The representations set out in your letter follow.

Taxpayer is a regulated public utility incorporated in State. It is wholly owned by Parent. Taxpayer distributes and sells natural gas to customers in State. Taxpayer is subject to the regulatory jurisdiction of Commission with respect to terms and conditions of service and particularly the rates it may charge for the provision of service. Taxpayer takes accelerated depreciation where available and, for the period beginning in Year A and ending in Year E, Taxpayer has, in the aggregate, produced more net operating losses (NOL) than taxable income. After application of the carryback and carryforward rules, Taxpayer represents that it has net operating loss carryforward (NOLC), produced in Year C and Year E, of \$X as of the end of Year E. The amount of claimed accelerated depreciation in Year C and Year E exceeded the amount of the NOLCs for those years. In Year D, Taxpayer produced regular taxable income as well as alternative minimum taxable income (AMTI); the regular taxable income was offset by the NOLCs from Year B and year C but could not offset the entire alternative minimum tax (AMT) liability due to the limitation in § 56(d). Taxpayer paid \$Y of AMT in Year D and had a minimum tax credit carryforward (MTCC) as of the end of year E of \$Y.

On its regulatory books of account, Taxpayer “normalizes” the differences between regulatory depreciation and tax depreciation. This means that, where accelerated depreciation reduces taxable income, the taxes that a taxpayer would have paid if regulatory depreciation (instead of accelerated tax depreciation) were claimed constitute “cost-free capital” to the taxpayer. A taxpayer that normalizes these differences, like Taxpayer, maintains a reserve account showing the amount of tax liability that is deferred as a result of the accelerated depreciation. This reserve is the accumulated deferred income tax (ADIT) account. Taxpayer maintains an ADIT account and also maintains an offsetting series of entries that reflect that portion of those ‘tax losses’ which, while due to accelerated depreciation, did not actually defer tax because of the existence of an NOLC. With respect to the \$Y AMT liability from Year D, Taxpayer carried that amount as an offset to the ADIT because the AMT increased the payment of tax.

Taxpayer filed a general rate case on Date A (Case). The test year used in the Case was the 12 month period ending on Date B. In establishing the income tax expense element of its cost of service, the tax benefits attributable to accelerated depreciation were normalized in accordance with Commission policy and were not flowed thru to ratepayers. In establishing the rate base on which Taxpayer was to be allowed to earn a return Commission generally offsets rate base by Taxpayer’s plant based ADIT balance, using a 13-month average of the month-end balances of the relevant accounts. Taxpayer argued that the ADIT balance should be reduced by the amounts that Taxpayer calculates did not actually defer tax due to the presence of

NOLCs or the AMT. Commission, in an order issued on Date C, did not use the amounts that Taxpayer calculates did not defer tax due to NOLCs or AMT but only the amount in the ADIT account. Taxpayer filed a petition for reconsideration based on the normalization implications of the order. On Date D, Commission rejected Taxpayer's request. Taxpayer again requested reconsideration and the Commission denied that request on Date E. Commission asserts that, in setting rates it includes a provision for deferred taxes based on the entire difference between accelerated tax and regulatory depreciation, including situations in which a utility has, such as in this case, an NOLC or AMT. Thus, Commission asserts that it has already recognized the effects of the NOCL in setting rates and there is no need to reduce the ADIT by the other amounts due to NOLCs or AMT.

Taxpayer requests that we rule as follows:

Under the circumstances described above, the reduction of Taxpayer's rate base by the full amount of its ADIT account without regard to the balances in its NOLC-related account and its MTCC-related account was consistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1 of the Income Tax regulations.

Law and Analysis

Section 168(f)(2) of the Code provides that the depreciation deduction determined under section 168 shall not apply to any public utility property (within the meaning of section 168(i)(10)) if the taxpayer does not use a normalization method of accounting.

In order to use a normalization method of accounting, section 168(i)(9)(A)(i) of the Code requires the taxpayer, in computing its tax expense for establishing its cost of service for ratemaking purposes and reflecting operating results in its regulated books of account, to use a method of depreciation with respect to public utility property that is the same as, and a depreciation period for such property that is not shorter than, the method and period used to compute its depreciation expense for such purposes. Under section 168(i)(9)(A)(ii), if the amount allowable as a deduction under section 168 differs from the amount that would be allowable as a deduction under section 167 using the method, period, first and last year convention, and salvage value used to compute regulated tax expense under section 168(i)(9)(A)(i), the taxpayer must make adjustments to a reserve to reflect the deferral of taxes resulting from such difference.

Section 168(i)(9)(B)(i) of the Code provides that one way the requirements of section 168(i)(9)(A) will not be satisfied is if the taxpayer, for ratemaking purposes, uses a procedure or adjustment which is inconsistent with such requirements. Under section 168(i)(9)(B)(ii), such inconsistent procedures and adjustments include the use of an estimate or projection of the taxpayer's tax expense, depreciation expense, or reserve for deferred taxes under section 168(i)(9)(A)(ii), unless such estimate or projection is

also used, for ratemaking purposes, with respect to all three of these items and with respect to the rate base.

Former section 167(l) of the Code generally provided that public utilities were entitled to use accelerated methods for depreciation if they used a “normalization method of accounting.” A normalization method of accounting was defined in former section 167(l)(3)(G) in a manner consistent with that found in section 168(i)(9)(A). Section 1.167(1)-1(a)(1) of the Income Tax Regulations provides that the normalization requirements for public utility property pertain only to the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the use of an accelerated method of depreciation for computing the allowance for depreciation under section 167 and the use of straight-line depreciation for computing tax expense and depreciation expense for purposes of establishing cost of services and for reflecting operating results in regulated books of account. These regulations do not pertain to other book-tax timing differences with respect to state income taxes, F.I.C.A. taxes, construction costs, or any other taxes and items.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h)(1)(i) provides that the reserve established for public utility property should reflect the total amount of the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the taxpayer’s use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes.

Section 1.167(1)-1(h)(1)(iii) provides that the amount of federal income tax liability deferred as a result of the use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes is the excess (computed without regard to credits) of the amount the tax liability would have been had the depreciation method for ratemaking purposes been used over the amount of the actual tax liability. This amount shall be taken into account for the taxable year in which the different methods of depreciation are used. If, however, in respect of any taxable year the use of a method of depreciation other than a subsection (1) method for purposes of determining the taxpayer’s reasonable allowance under section 167(a) results in a net operating loss carryover to a year succeeding such taxable year which would not have arisen (or an increase in such carryover which would not have arisen) had the taxpayer determined his reasonable allowance under section 167(a) using a subsection (1) method, then the amount and time of the deferral of tax liability shall be taken into account in such appropriate time and manner as is satisfactory to the district director.

Section 1.167(1)-1(h)(2)(i) provides that the taxpayer must credit this amount of deferred taxes to a reserve for deferred taxes, a depreciation reserve, or other reserve account. This regulation further provides that, with respect to any account, the aggregate amount allocable to deferred tax under section 167(1) shall not be reduced except to reflect the amount for any taxable year by which Federal income taxes are greater by reason of the prior use of different methods of depreciation. That section also notes that the aggregate amount allocable to deferred taxes may be reduced to

reflect the amount for any taxable year by which federal income taxes are greater by reason of the prior use of different methods of depreciation under section 1.167(1)-1(h)(1)(i) or to reflect asset retirements or the expiration of the period for depreciation used for determining the allowance for depreciation under section 167(a).

Section 1.167(1)-(h)(6)(i) provides that, notwithstanding the provisions of subparagraph (1) of that paragraph, a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes under section 167(l) which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking.

Section 1.167(1)-(h)(6)(ii) provides that, for the purpose of determining the maximum amount of the reserve to be excluded from the rate base (or to be included as no-cost capital) under subdivision (i), above, if solely an historical period is used to determine depreciation for Federal income tax expense for ratemaking purposes, then the amount of the reserve account for that period is the amount of the reserve (determined under section 1.167(1)-1(h)(2)(i)) at the end of the historical period. If such determination is made by reference both to an historical portion and to a future portion of a period, the amount of the reserve account for the period is the amount of the reserve at the end of the historical portion of the period and a pro rata portion of the amount of any projected increase to be credited or decrease to be charged to the account during the future portion of the period.

Section 55 of the Code imposes an alternative minimum tax on certain taxpayers, including corporations. Adjustments in computing alternative minimum taxable income are provided in § 56. Section 56(a)(1) provides for the treatment of depreciation in computing alternative minimum taxable income. Section 56(a)(1)(D) provides that, with respect to public utility property the Secretary shall prescribe the requirements of a normalization method of accounting for that section.

Section 1.167(l)-1(h) requires that a utility must maintain a reserve reflecting the total amount of the deferral of federal income tax liability resulting from the taxpayer's use of different depreciation methods for tax and ratemaking purposes. Taxpayer has done so. Section 1.167(1)-(h)(6)(i) provides that a taxpayer does not use a normalization method of regulated accounting if, for ratemaking purposes, the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes which is excluded from the base to which the taxpayer's rate of return is applied, or which is treated as no-cost capital in those rate cases in which the rate of return is based upon the cost of capital, exceeds the amount of such reserve for deferred taxes for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking. Section 56(a)(1)(D) provides

that, with respect to public utility property the Secretary shall prescribe the requirements of a normalization method of accounting for that section.

In the rate case at issue, Commission has excluded from the base to which the Taxpayer's rate of return is applied the reserve for deferred taxes, unmodified by the accounts which Taxpayer has designed to calculate the effects of the NOLCs and MTCC. There is little guidance on exactly how an NOLC or MTCC must be taken into account in calculating the reserve for deferred taxes under §§ 1.167(1)-1(h)(1)(iii) and 56(a)(1)(D). However, it is clear that both must be taken into account in calculating the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes (ADIT) for the period used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service in such ratemaking.

Both Commission and Taxpayer have intended, at all relevant times, to comply with the normalization requirements. Commission has stated that, in setting rates it includes a provision for deferred taxes based on the entire difference between accelerated tax and regulatory depreciation, including situations in which a utility has an NOLC or MTCC. Such a provision allows a utility to collect amounts from ratepayers equal to income taxes that would have been due absent the NOLC and MTCC. Thus, Commission has already taken the NOLC and MTCC into account in setting rates. Because the NOLC and MTCC have been taken into account, Commission's decision to not reduce the amount of the reserve for deferred taxes by these amounts does not result in the amount of that reserve for the period being used in determining the taxpayer's expense in computing cost of service exceeding the proper amount of the reserve and violate the normalization requirements. We therefore conclude that the reduction of Taxpayer's rate base by the full amount of its ADIT account without regard to the balances in its NOLC-related account and its MTCC-related account was consistent with the requirements of § 168(i)(9) and § 1.167(l)-1 of the Income Tax regulations.

This ruling is based on the representations submitted by Taxpayer and is only valid if those representations are accurate.

Except as specifically determined above, no opinion is expressed or implied concerning the Federal income tax consequences of the matters described above. In particular, while we accept as true for purposes of this ruling Commission's assertions that it includes a provision for deferred taxes based on the entire difference between accelerated tax and regulatory depreciation, including situations in which a utility has an NOLC or AMT, we do not conclude that it has done so and those assertions are subject to verification on audit.

This ruling is directed only to the taxpayer who requested it. Section 6110(k)(3) of the Code provides it may not be used or cited as precedent. In accordance with the power of attorney on file with this office, a copy of this letter is being sent to your

authorized representative. We are also sending a copy of this letter ruling to the Director.

Sincerely,

Peter C. Friedman
Senior Technician Reviewer, Branch 6
(Passthroughs & Special Industries)

cc: