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May 18, 2001

The Honorable Dale Hardy Roberts
Secretary/Chief Regulatory Law Judge
Missouri Public Service Commission
P.O. Box 360
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0360

FILED³
MAY 18 2001

Re: Case No. GT-2001-329

Missouri Public
Service Commission

Dear Judge Roberts:

Enclosed for filing please find the original and eight copies of a Response of Laclede Gas Company to Pleadings of Staff and Public Counsel and Motion for Modification of Filing Date for Surrebuttal Testimony.

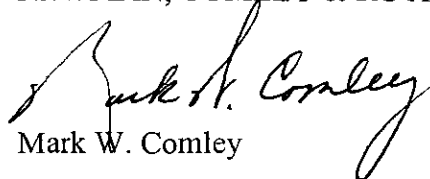
Would you please see that this filing is brought to the attention of the appropriate Commission personnel.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

NEWMAN, COMLEY & RUTH P.C.

By:


Mark W. Comley

MWC:ab

Enclosure

cc: Hon. Vicky Ruth
Hon. Morris Woodruff
Doug Micheel, Office of Public Counsel
Thomas R. Schwarz, Jr., General Counsel's Office
Diana Vuylsteke
Thomas M. Byrne
Larry W. Dority
Dean L. Cooper
Robert J. Hack
Michael C. Pendergast

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

FILED³
MAY 18 2001

In the Matter of Laclede Gas Company's)
Tariff Filing to Implement an Experimental)
Fixed Price Plan and Other Modifications)
To its Gas Supply Incentive Plan

Case No. GT-2001-329

Missouri Public
Service Commission

**RESPONSE OF LACLEDE GAS COMPANY TO PLEADINGS OF
STAFF AND PUBLIC COUNSEL AND MOTION FOR MODIFICATION OF
FILING DATE FOR SURREBUTTAL TESTIMONY**

COMES NOW Laclede Gas Company ("Laclede" or "Company") and for its
Response to Pleadings of Staff and Public Counsel and Motion for Motion for
Modification of Filing Date for Surrebuttal Testimony, states as follows:

1. On or about May 15, 2001, the Office of the Public Counsel ("Public Counsel") filed a Request for Leave to File Surrebuttal Testimony and Motion for Expedited Treatment. In its Request, Public Counsel seeks authorization to file surrebuttal testimony in this case for the purpose of responding to and raising any concerns it may have regarding the new incentive proposal which the Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission ("Staff") has set forth in its rebuttal testimony in this proceeding.

2. On or about May 15, 2001, the Staff also filed a Motion for Leave to Withdraw Highly Confidential Schedule and Substitute NP Schedule and Testimony. In its Motion, the Staff seeks to withdraw certain rebuttal testimony and a highly confidential schedule filed by Staff witness David Sommerer. Specifically, Staff seeks to withdraw annual cost and volume data for Missouri local distribution companies that Staff had used, over the objections of Laclede and other LDCs, to compare the percentage

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price change in the delivered cost of gas from year to year for each LDC. In place of this highly confidential information, Staff proposes to substitute a non-proprietary schedule and testimony.

3. Laclede has no objection to either the Request filed by Public Counsel or the Motion filed by Staff. Given the uncertainties which have been engendered by the discovery disputes in this case, however, Laclede has discussed with both Staff and Public Counsel the need for an extension in the filing date for surrebuttal testimony in this case. Counsel for both Staff and Public Counsel have indicated that they do not object to extending the date for filing surrebuttal testimony to noon on May 30, 2001. Counsel for Union Electric Company d/b/a AmerenUE, Missouri Gas Energy, UtiliCorp United, Inc. and the Missouri Industrial Energy Consumers have also indicated that they do not object to the requested extension. Laclede accordingly requests that the Commission grant this requested extension in its Order addressing Public Counsel's Request and Staff's Motion.¹

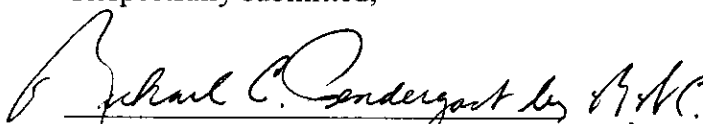
4. Finally, while Laclede appreciates Staff's willingness to eliminate its use of certain information which Laclede and other LDCs found objectionable, the Company wishes to note for the record that it continues to disagree with the suggestion that the quality of an LDC's performance can be fairly or accurately ascertained from a simple, broad-based comparison of the relative percentage changes in the delivered gas costs experienced by dissimilar LDCs. This is particularly true in the absence of a very detailed and rigorous analysis of how the various factors that vary from one LDC to the

¹ Laclede has agreed that at the time it files its surrebuttal testimony it will also hand-deliver copies of such testimony to both the Staff and Public Counsel.

next, including factors that are beyond the control of the LDC, may affect such costs and changes thereto.

WHEREFORE, for the foregoing reasons, Laclede respectfully requests that the Commission issue an order extending the date for filing surrebuttal testimony to noon on May 30, 2001.

Respectfully submitted,

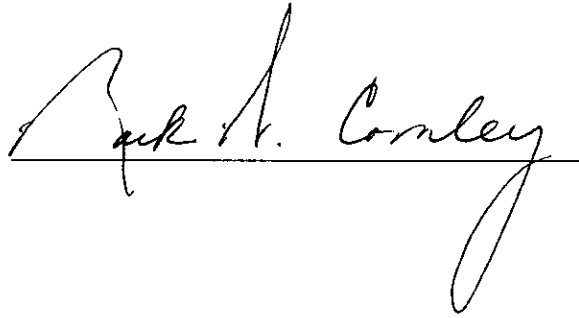
A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michael C. Pendergast by A.C.", is written over a horizontal line.

Michael C. Pendergast #31763

Laclede Gas Company
Assistant Vice President and
Associate General Counsel
Laclede Gas Company
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St. Louis, MO 63101
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(314) 421-1979 Fax

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned hereby certifies that the foregoing Response and Motion has been duly served upon the General Counsel of the Staff of the Public Service Commission, Office of the Public Counsel and all parties of record to this proceeding by placing a copy thereof in the United States mail, postage prepaid, or by hand delivery, on this 18th day of May, 2001.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Rick A. Cornley", is written over a horizontal line.