

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

STATE OF MISSOURI

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

LOCAL PUBLIC HEARING

In the Matter of the Request                    )  
of The Empire District Electric                )  
Company d/b/a Liberty for                        ) File No. ER-2024-0261  
Authority to File Tariffs                        )  
Increasing Rates for Electric                    )  
Service Provided to Customers                    )  
in its Missouri Service Area                    )

TUESDAY, JULY 22, 2025  
12:00 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.

City Council Chambers  
715 West Mount Vernon Street  
Nixa, MO 65714

VOLUME 3  
Pages 1 - 69

CHARLES HATCHER, Presiding  
SENIOR REGULATORY LAW JUDGE

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

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

1 APPEARANCES:

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3 Public Service Commission:

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17 On behalf of Liberty (Empire):

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20 Jefferson City, MO 65101

21 BY: DIANA CARTER, ESQ.  
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23  
24  
25

1 The following proceedings began at 1:17 p.m.:

2 JUDGE HATCHER: Let's go on the record. Today  
3 is July 22, 2025. The time is 1:17 p.m. The question  
4 and answer portion, which you just participated in, is  
5 concluded. If you did attend that, I do hope that you  
6 were able to get all of your questions answered.

7 What we'll do now is start the comment portion  
8 of the hearing. The Missouri Public Service Commission  
9 has set this time for a local public hearing to give  
10 members of the public a chance to comment about  
11 Liberty's request for a rate increase. That is in Case  
12 No. ER-2024-0261.

13 My name is Charles Hatcher. I am the  
14 Regulatory Law Judge that will oversee this hearing.  
15 The Commission regulates the rates charged by public  
16 utility companies in Missouri to ensure that those rates  
17 are just and reasonable. The Commission also regulates  
18 the quality of service and safety of operations of  
19 public utilities.

20 The Commission is made up of five  
21 Commissioners. The Commission's Chair, Kayla Hahn, and  
22 Commissioner John Mitchell are with me here today. Also  
23 in attendance are Commissioners Maida Coleman and Glen  
24 Kolkmeier. They are on our computer connection and will  
25 be listening online. And there is one vacancy at the

1 moment on the Commission.

2 The Commissioners are appointed by the  
3 Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The Commission  
4 employs a staff of engineers, accountants, attorneys,  
5 financial analysts and other specialists in the field of  
6 utility regulation. And Commissioner Mitchell, would  
7 you like to make opening comments?

8 COMMISSIONER MITCHELL: Sure. Thank you,  
9 Judge. On behalf of the entire Commission, I'd like to  
10 welcome you here this afternoon. This is the very first  
11 step in this rate proceeding and it's an important step  
12 because it's the Commission's really only chance to get  
13 to hear directly from you, the customers. And your  
14 thoughts and testimony on this matter are very important  
15 to us, and I want to assure you that your thoughts and  
16 your comments will be taken seriously and taken to heart  
17 as we move through this process. So thank you for being  
18 here. We genuinely appreciate it.

19 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Commissioner.  
20 Let's move to having the parties introduce themselves.  
21 First for Liberty.

22 MS. CARTER: Diana Carter for the Empire  
23 District Electric Company doing business as Liberty.

24 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And for the Staff  
25 of the Commission.

1 MR. GRAHAM: Paul Graham for the Staff of the  
2 Missouri Public Service Commission.

3 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And the Office of  
4 the Public Counsel.

5 MR. WILLIAMS: Nathan Williams, Chief Deputy  
6 Public Counsel, appearing on behalf of the public and  
7 the Office of the Public Counsel.

8 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. We did have  
9 several intervenors in this case. Did any of those  
10 counsel want to introduce themselves on the record? All  
11 right. Hearing none.

12 This is a fairly well attended hearing, which  
13 is great as the Commission does want to hear from the  
14 public, and we also do want to give everyone the  
15 opportunity to speak. So I will have to be limiting  
16 comments to three minutes each. I currently have a  
17 little over 30 persons signed up to comment, and we will  
18 need to end the hearing today at three o'clock.

19 The Commission has another hearing in this  
20 case, another public comment session, going on tonight.  
21 That will start at 6:00. And that is a little over an  
22 hour drive away. We also need to get all of the staff  
23 and equipment to the next location. So I will be  
24 letting everyone know when your three minutes are up.  
25 We also have a timer going on in the audience.

1           After you do come up and give your comments,  
2 I'll ask for you to stay for just a second to see if any  
3 of the Commissioners or counsel have any questions. And  
4 speaking of questions, I did want to let everyone know  
5 that the Commissioners and myself will not be able to  
6 answer questions for you today. That's what the  
7 question and answer portion was for. This is for the  
8 Commissioners to hear your information. But since  
9 they're still deciding the case, they won't be able to  
10 really comment on what your question or your comment  
11 might be, because they need to wait until after all of  
12 the evidence is in and then they'll make an official  
13 ruling on the case.

14           With that in mind, I will go ahead and start  
15 calling names. And I will do my best to read and  
16 pronounce your name correctly. I apologize in advance,  
17 this happens to me at every hearing, I will accidentally  
18 mispronounce some names. The first name I have is  
19 Connie Horton. I'm also going to read the next few  
20 names so that those persons are ready and we can start  
21 getting people up to the microphone. Cheryl Arledge and  
22 Leo Arledge are the next two names.

23           Ms. Horton, I'd like to swear you in first.  
24 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony  
25 you're about to give will be the truth?

1 MS. HORTON: Yes.

2 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please state and  
3 spell your name for the court reporter.

4 MS. HORTON: Connie Horton, C-o-n-n-i-e  
5 H-o-o-r-t-o-n.

6 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Horton. Please  
7 go ahead and give your comments.

8 MS. HORTON: My comments mainly have to do  
9 with the utilities that my daughter has. I also am --  
10 you can't hear?

11 JUDGE HATCHER: Yes. Can we get the back  
12 doors closed. It's a little hard to hear in here.  
13 These microphones are a little special. You have to  
14 kind of direct --

15 MS. HORTON: Get right on them.

16 JUDGE HATCHER: Yes. You're on. I will  
17 restart your three minutes. Go ahead.

18 MS. HORTON: My daughter lives out towards the  
19 Sparta area. I also have a home out towards Sparta. My  
20 daughter's utility bills for the winter were really high  
21 and she had her thermostat set at 58 degrees. Her bill  
22 came in at, let me look real quick, \$435 at a 58 degree  
23 temperature. I ended up spending \$400 myself on wood  
24 just so that she could run her wood stove. She ended up  
25 sleeping in the living room. And she does have

1 insulation and everything in her house. We could not  
2 understand why her bill was so high. And if you  
3 increase this by 30, 40 percent, she said she would go  
4 ahead and just basically turn off her furnace. It's a  
5 brand new furnace. New electric, new furnace,  
6 everything. But she said I cannot afford it, mom. She  
7 said I'm going to have to just heat with wood this  
8 winter.

9 So for the young people and the people that  
10 are retired with a fixed income, house payments or rent,  
11 they cannot afford 40 percent, 30 percent. I understand  
12 a little bit to keep things up, but this is a little bit  
13 on the outrageous side. That's all I have to say.

14 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mrs. Horton. Were  
15 there any questions for Ms. Horton? Hearing none.  
16 Thank you. I appreciate you being here today. And  
17 Cheryl Arledge. I'm sorry.

18 MS. ARLEDGE: Yes. I'm here representing my  
19 little food bank in Sparta, Missouri.

20 JUDGE HATCHER: Before you get started, let me  
21 swear you in real quick. Do you solemnly swear or  
22 affirm that the testimony you're about to give will be  
23 the truth?

24 MS. ARLEDGE: Yes sir.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please state and



1 spell your name for our court reporter.

2 MS. ARLEDGE: It's Cheryl Arledge, C-h-e-r-y-l  
3 A-r-l-e-d-g-e.

4 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please go ahead  
5 with your comment.

6 MS. ARLEDGE: Okay. Well, I'm here  
7 representing my little food bank in Sparta. It's out of  
8 the Hope of Sparta Church. I'm the director there. And  
9 as many of you have heard the least of these commercials  
10 they serve about 900 families a month. Our little  
11 church takes on some of the overspill from them who  
12 don't have proper paperwork or whatever. So we serve  
13 anywhere from 50 to 100 families a month, on average  
14 anywhere from five to seven people in those families,  
15 which we're self-funded.

16 And I'm thinking if we have this kind of a  
17 rate increase, I don't see how any of these people are  
18 going to afford 30 to 40 percent. We're not exactly  
19 hurting, but 30, 40 percent is going to take a dent in  
20 our wallets too. It's also going to put more stress on  
21 our tiny little food bank, which we don't have much of a  
22 budget because we are a small church. And I'm afraid  
23 I'm going to have to be telling people I'm sorry, I  
24 can't give you any food because we just don't have any  
25 left. I don't want to do that to anybody. I take it

1 out of my own cabinet to provide food for some of these  
2 families because sometimes you know they don't have  
3 anything. It makes me almost cry some of these people  
4 that we go to see and how they're living. I just don't  
5 see how any of them are going to afford this. And I  
6 don't want to see it hurt the kind of help that we are  
7 trying to provide to the community. So that's that.

8 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Arledge. I  
9 appreciate you being here today to share that with us.  
10 Mr. Arledge. Let me swear you in. Do you solemnly  
11 swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to give  
12 will be the truth?

13 MR. ARLEDGE: I do.

14 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please state and  
15 spell your name for our court reporter.

16 MR. ARLEDGE: Leo Arledge, L-e-o  
17 A-r-l-e-d-g-e. The lady before me just happens to be my  
18 wife. Okay. I am an alderman for Ward 1 of Sparta. As  
19 such, I already know people are struggling to pay their  
20 utility bills in Sparta. If you raise this 40 percent,  
21 it is going to force people to choose between cooling or  
22 heat, eating or not eating. And as far as the ladies  
23 were saying that the electricity would bring more  
24 business, we all know electricity does not bring in  
25 business. Gas, natural gas will bring in business.

1 Electricity at this point is a stopgap measure  
2 for Sparta. If you raise it, you will kill a lot of  
3 small businesses in Sparta because they will not be able  
4 to afford it. And we don't have that much anyway.

5 Questions?

6 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. I appreciate that.  
7 I wasn't ready for that, Mr. Arledge. I appreciate  
8 that. Were there any questions? Hearing none. Thank  
9 you. I appreciate you coming out today. We have Jeanne  
10 McFall, Audrey Grobe. I apologize. And then Seth  
11 Ramming. Ms. McFall. Thank you. I'll swear you in.  
12 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony  
13 you're about to give will be the truth?

14 MS. McFALL: Yes.

15 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you could state  
16 and spell your name for the record.

17 MS. McFALL: Jeanne McFall, J-e-a-n-n-e  
18 M-c-F-a-l-l. I think my main concern today is with the  
19 39 percent, almost 40 percent increase. We are here in  
20 Nixa. Nixa is a supplier of electricity, not Empire in  
21 this area or Liberty. Their rate is .10980. What we  
22 are looking to have if this would go through is .19531  
23 which is almost double of what somebody living in the  
24 city of Nixa is paying today.

25 The Missouri average is .1289 and that's on

1 City Utilities website. So we're looking at almost  
2 double what other regions are paying. So that's  
3 something to take into consideration why do we need that  
4 big of increase.

5 I think the biggest problem I've had with  
6 Liberty in the last -- since April, they did electronic  
7 meters, they changed their computer system, their  
8 billing system is out of line. They have not corrected  
9 these issues. They do have a new administrator that was  
10 hired three weeks ago, but I did make a request prior to  
11 this meeting to get the outages that I've experienced on  
12 my meter within the last year. That wasn't available  
13 until 12:11 today. That took over a month to get that  
14 information because my meter wouldn't recognize that.

15 I have called in for outages at least three  
16 times in the last year. The last time I was on hold for  
17 45 minutes because it didn't recognize my phone number.  
18 Come to find out my phone number wasn't acceptable  
19 because nobody had checked the box that said USA in  
20 front of it. That's a computer issue, not mine. That's  
21 a company issue. I have been at the same address all  
22 but one year of my life. My phone hasn't changed. My  
23 location hasn't changed. The company has changed.

24 And they need to look at the billing issues,  
25 the extra postage that they have charged, the extra

1 customer service time that's been involved, and now  
2 we're having to pay for it because of that. The last  
3 meeting I attended was at Ozark, which was a different  
4 issue than the rate increase. But we have nine  
5 streetlights that were out that evening when I went  
6 home. Those nine streetlights are still out on 3rd and  
7 South Street. They are not taking care of business.

8 The future development in Ozark is looking at  
9 other utility companies. The new development across  
10 from Walmart is going with White River Electric. The  
11 new development behind James River Assemblies of God is  
12 looking at Ozark Electric. They are not wanting to use  
13 the electric company. Thank you.

14 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. I appreciate that.  
15 I appreciate everybody being here and showing their  
16 support. If we can maybe hold off on the applause, that  
17 gets us through the witnesses a little faster so that  
18 all of your neighbors can have their say. Ms. Grobe.  
19 Thank you, ma'am. If you would let me swear you in. Do  
20 you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are  
21 about to give will be the truth?

22 MS. GROBE: Yes.

23 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And if you could  
24 please state and spell your name for our court reporter.

25 MS. GROBE: Audrey Grobe, A-u-d-r-e-y

1 G-r-o-b-e.

2 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Grobe. Please  
3 go ahead.

4 MS. GROBE: I'm a resident of Ozark, have been  
5 for about four years. One of my comments is you're  
6 asking for more money but I am still paying for a 2007  
7 storm that occurred when my house was not even built.  
8 There are hundreds of other houses that were built since  
9 then. That tells me you've been getting paid for a  
10 storm that happened in 2007 for 18 years, and there are  
11 hundreds of more houses that are paying that. Why are  
12 you needing more money? That shouldn't even be on my  
13 bill now. That's just crazy.

14 And you told me earlier that you were putting  
15 in a new program where you're going to pay people who  
16 have not been able to pay their bill. Well, who's  
17 paying that? We are. That's not fair. I just happen  
18 to be a senior citizen. I worked for 52 years before I  
19 retired. I am on a fixed income. I get a 2-1/2 percent  
20 raise. You're asking for 30. Inflation is not near  
21 that. Why do you think that you need that much money?  
22 You don't. You need to run your business better.

23 I can give you an example of a place where you  
24 didn't run your business well at all. We had three  
25 trees behind our fence that were in the lines. Your

1 people come out and they trimmed the top of them out.  
2 We told them you can take the tree out so you don't have  
3 to come back. Oh, no, we can't do that. We paid \$3,000  
4 to get those trees taken out and it was your  
5 responsibility. Thank you.

6 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Grobe. I  
7 appreciate you being here and bringing your comments.  
8 Seth Ramming.

9 MR. RAMMING: Yes.

10 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. I was hoping  
11 I would pronounce it correctly. Do you solemnly swear  
12 or affirm that the testimony you're about to give will  
13 be the truth?

14 MR. RAMMING: I do.

15 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And would you  
16 please state and spell your name for the court reporter.

17 MR. RAMMING: My name is Seth Ramming, S-e-t-h  
18 R-a-m-m-i-n-g.

19 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please go ahead  
20 with your comments.

21 MR. RAMMING: I'm a 27-year-old resident of  
22 the city of Sparta. I live in -- I own a home there in  
23 the 25 percent sector that Liberty Utility owns. When I  
24 saw this paper here, I was immediately ready to see what  
25 I can do to switch over to White River Electric Company.

1 I'm just going to call it what it is. This is absolute  
2 price gouging through and through. I mean, 40 percent.  
3 You're looking at an average of what most people  
4 actually get in their wage increases is about 3 to 6  
5 percent. This is really just a lot. Here I'm closer to  
6 the PSC staff recommendation. Personally I agree with  
7 the Office of Public Counsel that there shouldn't be any  
8 increase.

9 The \$3 fuel transfer fee that they're talking  
10 about here over on the next page I do agree with.  
11 That's only a \$3 increase. That doesn't bother me too  
12 much. But personally I'm more on the side of PSC Staff  
13 recommendations. That's more equitable.

14 Sparta is a town of 2,000 people. There's a  
15 lot of low income people. There's a lot of disabled  
16 people. There's a lot of people who are on social  
17 security. There's basically low income. Personally I  
18 don't really feel like this is actually going to do very  
19 well for people who live there, nor do I really feel  
20 like it's going to do well for business. When we talk  
21 about something like this, we have to consider not only  
22 the residents but we have to consider the economy. I  
23 don't really feel like this is going to do well for the  
24 economy.

25 I'm not here to argue. I'm not here to make



1 outrageous claims or debate with anyone. This is just  
2 how it is. God bless the people in Missouri. God bless  
3 the United States.

4 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Ramming. I  
5 appreciate you being here. Let me go ahead and call the  
6 next few names. I believe it's spelled M-i-r-e Batz,  
7 B-a-t-z. And then a Kathy Coons and then Rick Hagan.  
8 Does that first name ring a bell to anyone? It sure  
9 looks like the last name starts with a B. I'll circle  
10 back around. Ms. Coons, please go ahead and step up to  
11 the microphone. I will swear you in. Do you solemnly  
12 swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to give  
13 will be the truth?

14 MS. COONS: I do.

15 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you would  
16 please state and spell your name for the court reporter.

17 MS. COONS: My name is Kathy Coons, K-a-t-h-y  
18 C-o-o-n-s.

19 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Coons. Please  
20 go ahead with your comment.

21 MS. COONS: I think the question is why a  
22 company that gives its CEO and top executives large  
23 compensation packages, has shown good profits for the  
24 past several years, who has spent money on acquisitions  
25 and buying back of stock shares would need to force such

1 a large increase on its captive customer base.

2 Any company with a non-captive customer base  
3 would lose its clients to the competition. Good recent  
4 examples would be cell phone, TV and internet companies,  
5 all of which have been forced to change their strategies  
6 due to customer loss over their incessant price  
7 increases. Logically customer base growth should cover  
8 some cost increases in the long term. Certainly  
9 Southwest Missouri it has and is seeing such growth.

10 I feel I know that Liberty is asking for more  
11 than they expect to get. If the rate increase is  
12 reduced somewhat, we're all supposed to feel like we got  
13 something, but truly this rate increase is an abuse of  
14 the captive customer base and the large increase request  
15 is unwarranted for a company with the strong financial  
16 position.

17 Let them do some of the sacrificing we are  
18 being forced to take the full brunt of. When is a  
19 decent profit going to be enough. In my opinion that  
20 will be never. That's why we have to rely on you to  
21 protect the interests of us, the captive customer.  
22 Thank you.

23 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Coons. I  
24 appreciate you being here. Rick Hagan. The next couple  
25 names are Darlene Nap and Katie Medcalf. Mr. Hagan, let

1 me swear you in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that  
2 the testimony you're about to give will be the truth?

3 MR. HAGAN: I do.

4 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you would  
5 please state and spell your name for the record.

6 MR. HAGAN: R-i-c-k H-a-g-a-n.

7 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Hagan. Please  
8 go ahead with your comment.

9 MR. HAGAN: Well, I know several of you guys  
10 were not in here for the question and answer session.  
11 But the last gentleman had asked a question, point blank  
12 asked Empire or Liberty what their profits were. They  
13 only stipulated for Empire District that last year they  
14 had a profit of \$116 million is what she stated and you  
15 guys had also stated that they had done their updates to  
16 the dam and to one of the generating plants or two of  
17 the generating plants.

18 You're wanting to upgrade substations and  
19 stuff now. If you made a profit of that on top of all  
20 the expense last year, why can't you do that every year.  
21 I mean, you're wanting another, almost another 153  
22 million on top of that. That will give you -- starting  
23 next year that will give you -- if you stayed on that  
24 same track, that would give you a profit of over \$300  
25 million a year. You can't put some of that in a savings

1 account and pay for some of your own expenses? I have  
2 to do that for my house. I just don't understand why  
3 you guys think you need that big of an increase.

4 The rest of you guys you're sitting there,  
5 turn around and look at that screen. It says Missouri  
6 Public Service Commission. You're here to protect the  
7 public. And if you guys approve them having this  
8 increase, you're not serving the public. That's my  
9 opinion and everybody's entitled to that. You guys  
10 really seriously need to think about who you are  
11 representing or who you're supposed to be representing.  
12 Thank you. Any questions for me?

13 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Hagan. I don't  
14 hear any. Appreciate you coming out today. Darlene  
15 Nap. Thank you, ma'am. Please come on down. I will  
16 swear you in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the  
17 testimony you're about to give will be the truth?

18 MS. NAP: Yes.

19 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And if you would  
20 please state and spell your name for the record.

21 MS. NAP: Darlene Nap, simple, N-a-p.

22 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Nap. Please go  
23 ahead with your comments.

24 MS. NAP: Thank you for the opportunity to  
25 speak. I was at the townhall meeting in Ozark. My

1 question is without really an answer how is it that you  
2 want to go ahead and request an increase in rates yet we  
3 haven't even addressed because it's under investigation  
4 for all the billing errors, not just about late billing  
5 combined but about huge erroneous billings.

6 I had an \$800 bill combined in four days. I  
7 moved into the apartment in January. So January bill is  
8 398, and the February bill is 297. It's just me living  
9 there. I'm hardly there. I'm working 12-hour shifts as  
10 a nurse. All that said and done, I'm told oh, check  
11 your appliances. It's a brand new facility at Finley  
12 Ridge. That's why I moved there. Then they'd be like  
13 oh, it's maybe the meter. Nobody ever came to look at  
14 the meter until I went to the town meeting. Then, of  
15 course, they immediately set that up and somebody came  
16 out. He didn't explain to me how the meter works.

17 I understand some things about a meter because  
18 I moved from Colorado to Missouri by choice. Well, that  
19 was my choice. I planned it for six years. Then I  
20 arrive. But I'm thinking about when we had this  
21 employee here from Texas when I was in Colorado, I know  
22 you guys would know about that with the meter changes  
23 issues that happened in Texas, and then Colorado was  
24 bombarded with serious increased rates when they put  
25 their meters in and now I'm seeing all this going on

1 with all this talk.

2 The rates were double, triple, just like my  
3 electric bill was tripled even though we didn't have --  
4 maybe we had the new meters put in. I don't know. I  
5 moved here last year. All that said and done, yeah,  
6 having brought her in from Texas from three weeks ago, I  
7 took note of that. You're asking for a rate increase.  
8 Then you have this. Again, I went through all of that  
9 in Colorado last year.

10 In closing, I'm 65. I'm not retired but I'm  
11 on social security for a death. So therefore social  
12 security does limit my income. Yes, I already received  
13 a letter from them for not being a hero but having to be  
14 stuck working as a nurse because agency didn't show up  
15 due to no show, no call. Now I've got to pay half of  
16 that back for the couple extra shifts I was kind of  
17 forced to work because I can't leave my patients. That  
18 would be neglect.

19 Okay. Moving right along, I am on limited  
20 income. And looking at all of this, do I really want to  
21 stay in Ozark? No. I've already researched. I can  
22 only work part time again with the limited income  
23 restrictions. I can make \$1,900 a month. Oh, okay.  
24 Let me just give up my salary for \$1,900 a month and  
25 live off of beans and rice. I did all that with the

1 Ramsey, David Ramsey method and paid off my debt. Now  
2 I'm in debt again. I'm going backwards instead of  
3 forward.

4 Nursing homes have issues which we're not  
5 going to talk about but because of Medicare and Medicaid  
6 and staffing issues and stuff like that, but we're not  
7 able to do anything to address those issues. But we  
8 have to do something to give Liberty a rate increase? I  
9 don't get a rate increase as a nurse. I'm making \$10  
10 less an hour. All that said and done, it's just a  
11 thought and process. Thank you. Good day.

12 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Medcalf. I  
13 appreciate you being here today. We do have a question  
14 for you. Mr. Williams.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: It's just a quick one. You  
16 mentioned January and February. You didn't indicate  
17 which year.

18 MS. NAP: This year. I moved into the  
19 apartment in January. December 30 I signed a lease just  
20 to lock it in. I paid a month in January for a Nixa  
21 apartment just to give myself time to pack and purge  
22 everything.

23 MR. WILLIAMS: Have you had any billing issues  
24 since then?

25 MS. NAP: I didn't after March I mean. So

1 that was January, February. After March. After March  
2 it was like \$50 a month, 52.

3 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

4 MS. NAP: Thank you.

5 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Let me read the  
6 next few names. Katie -- I'm sorry. That was Ms.  
7 Medcalf. No, I'm sorry. Katie Medcalf. Heike Helsley.  
8 I apologize. Terry Sweeney and Gary. Thank you, sir.  
9 Ms. Medcalf, let me swear you in. Do you solemnly swear  
10 or affirm that the testimony you're about to give will  
11 be the truth?

12 MS. MEDCALF: Yes.

13 JUDGE HATCHER: Please state and spell your  
14 name for the record.

15 MS. MEDCALF: Katie Medcalf, K-a-t-i-e  
16 M-e-d-c-a-l-f. I'm here today. I was actually at the  
17 Ozark one. I've had nothing but issues since I switched  
18 over to the billing. They actually did resolve it  
19 because the Missouri Public Service Commission was on  
20 their butts about getting it done. But I called month  
21 after month. I couldn't access my online account. And  
22 I kept being put as a late payer. One month I got an  
23 \$800 bill.

24 I have four kids in my home. It's terrifying  
25 to know that my electric is going to be turned off. I'm



1 not a bad payer. I'm not behind on anything. I have a  
2 great credit score. But I couldn't pay. I was not able  
3 to physically pay them because I couldn't get online.  
4 It was not possible. I called month after month.  
5 They're like you're on our list. We'll get to you.  
6 Nobody has touched it. Nobody has touched it after  
7 every month. I'm like I just want to pay. I'd gone  
8 into the office and paid them, but I wasn't able to see  
9 where my payments had come in. So that was really  
10 frustrating. But to find out that you guys are planning  
11 on, I looked this morning on the websites, which  
12 Liberty, by the way, they're not transparent.  
13 Unfortunately it's the worst website to find. They  
14 didn't give me their rates. But the rest of them, White  
15 River Valley, Ozark Electric Co-op, Webster, these are  
16 my coworkers. This is what they have. They're like  
17 they're great.

18 They're paying 12 cents a kilowatt, 10 cents a  
19 kilowatt. I looked today 10 cents a kilowatt for  
20 Webster. Even City Utilities is 11 cents. We're paying  
21 14 to 16 cents per kilowatt roughly. And this rate  
22 increase will be 16 to 22 cents a kilowatt raise. I  
23 mean, that's double what they are paying for even the  
24 next highest levels. I mean, I won't be able to afford  
25 it. I'm already struggling. I work four jobs and

1 raising my kids.

2 I know that there's seniors that have limited  
3 income, but I also work my butt off to pay what I can.  
4 I hate being late. I am late. I'm worried that \$500  
5 every two weeks trying to catch up is not going to be  
6 enough.

7 It just frustrates me knowing that AQN, the  
8 New York Exchange, that man makes \$9 million. His base  
9 salary is \$900,000 a year and the rest of it is paid in  
10 stocks. That's what they're wanting is they're wanting  
11 a return on investment. He's wanting more money.  
12 That's where that money is going unfortunately is in  
13 their pockets. It's not me. It's not my neighbors.  
14 And this business about oh, bringing in business. No,  
15 the company I work for just watched our bill, because I  
16 do the accounting for them, it doubled. I'm like where  
17 is this coming from. You guys raised the rates. She  
18 said in 2022 you guys raised to, what, 14 cents a  
19 kilowatt. In '22. The websites that I looked today, in  
20 '25 they let them raise the rates from 10 cents to 12  
21 cents for these other places. They raised the rates  
22 three years ago higher than what the rates now are. And  
23 they're asking for even more. I just find it very  
24 frustrating that somebody is greed. That's just what  
25 they want from us is just more money. It's just greed.

1 Thanks.

2 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Medcalf. We do  
3 have a question for you.

4 MR. WILLIAMS: I do.

5 JUDGE HATCHER: Yes, yes. I don't want to --  
6 sorry, Mr. Williams. You go ahead.

7 MR. WILLIAMS: All right. My question is  
8 about the time frame you had the billing issues. When  
9 did it start and when did you get resolution?

10 MS. MEDCALF: I heard about they were  
11 switching over last year. I tried to get on the online  
12 is what happened to me. I typed in my position to the  
13 Public Service Commission. I submitted that for the  
14 other case that they were in Ozark for. I did send that  
15 in. I think it was last year somebody had called and  
16 taken my address out of service. I had been there for  
17 like several years. I called and they couldn't find my  
18 account at first. It took me an entire day off of work  
19 trying to figure that out to get my electric turned back  
20 on. They turned it off. Some other company had come  
21 in.

22 I kept trying to get online to log into the  
23 old system. It wouldn't let me. I tried logging into  
24 the new system. I was like forgot password. None of  
25 that was working. It was frustrating. So that was

1 probably -- I finally got back to try to get into the  
2 system. They hooked me back up to my service in  
3 October. It took me October, November, December,  
4 January, February, March. What was the last meeting?  
5 Last month. So I've only had it for a month. So it's  
6 been out seven months I've been trying to get a hold of  
7 them to even allow me to pay my bill. Now I'm behind.  
8 And my bill -- I understand. I have four kids in my  
9 home. My bill is going to be higher than the average  
10 two-person, four-person household. I'm aware of that.  
11 When it builds up for eight to ten months and I'm trying  
12 to pay it and I keep trying to pay it, and they keep  
13 shooting me down to pay it. I can't be the other  
14 person. There has got to be other households that  
15 weren't paying. So if they think they don't have money,  
16 trust me it's there. They just need to work out their  
17 billing issues to get it before they ask for more.

18 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

19 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Medcalf. I  
20 appreciate you being here.

21 MS. HELSLEY: Hi. This is Heike Helsley.

22 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you so much. I  
23 appreciate that. Let me swear you in. Do you solemnly  
24 swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to give  
25 will be the truth?

1 MS. HELSLEY: Yes, I do, sir.

2 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And please go  
3 ahead and give us your comments.

4 MS. HELSLEY: The name is Heike Helsley. It's  
5 spelled H-e-i-k-e H-e-l-s-l-e-y. So I'm here. I've  
6 lived in Ozark for 15 years raising my family, my two  
7 boys. I have a house with 2,300 square foot, and I have  
8 solar. I do have my temperature down in the winter so  
9 around 60. And I do have it at 75 now in the  
10 summertime. So I really try to conserve energy where I  
11 can. And I still have a high bill, especially in the  
12 winter months. Last December, January, February part  
13 was like almost \$600 right now.

14 So when we have the increase there of 30 or 40  
15 percent, that's like outrageous, that increase. I  
16 cannot call it any different because I'm sure nobody in  
17 this room gets a 30 or 40 percent raise of anything, not  
18 by the bank of interest, not by the employer. Nobody  
19 does. There's a lot of people that are on fixed incomes  
20 and we're being squeezed from all sides. Not just from  
21 the electricity, of course.

22 So bigger picture is I'm thinking I'm doing  
23 everything right to conserve. I have to have  
24 electricity because it's not where I say I don't have  
25 Paramount streaming service, I can live without that. I

1 cannot live without electricity. And I conserve. But I  
2 still get hit with 30, 40 percent. That is just wrong.

3 I understand everything gets a little bit more  
4 expensive. I understand that. There needs to be  
5 improvements, which I would love to see some  
6 improvements in better energy, clearer energy that  
7 doesn't cost so much to get it here. But 30 percent is  
8 just over the top and I don't see that it is justified  
9 or acceptable.

10 And hearing what I heard today, it makes  
11 perfect sense when we have some shareholders. Let me  
12 tell you I worked for the biggest retailer in the  
13 country for over 20 years. And when they have their  
14 shareholder meetings, they have to tell them okay, we  
15 did so much profit but guess how they did it. They  
16 lived within their means. They took a look at every  
17 cost cutting detail that they can do.

18 And my question is, and I really question  
19 that, that Liberty is doing that with all the issues  
20 that went on last year with the billing which I have had  
21 not a proper bill since last May until this May I guess.  
22 There was months that were skipped and I have no idea  
23 what I made or what I used.

24 And it's all guesswork. So my biggest issue  
25 with this is that it's too high and I see no

1 justification for it with those projects that they said  
2 that would make so much. And I don't understand why we  
3 as consumers have to pay for that so much. So thank  
4 you. That's all I have.

5 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Helsley. No  
6 questions. I appreciate you being here, coming out  
7 today. Terry Sweeney. Understood. And Gary Bilyeu.  
8 Let me swear you in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm  
9 that the testimony you're about to give will be the  
10 truth?

11 MR. BILYEU: Yes.

12 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you would  
13 please state and spell your name for the court reporter.

14 MR. BILYEU: Gary Bilyeu, G-a-r-y B-i-l-y-e-u.

15 JUDGE HATCHER: Mr. Bilyeu, please go ahead  
16 with your comment.

17 MR. BILYEU: I pretty much just wanted to give  
18 my position where I'm at. I'm a small business owner  
19 from Sparta. I've had my business since 2019 in March  
20 16 when I started it. I've got my own home. I am  
21 solely responsible for all of my bills. I share 50  
22 percent custody of my daughter, Charlotte. So I do pay  
23 child support on top of that.

24 Being a small business owner, I have an  
25 excavator payment. I do dictate my own income. And it

1 depends on how much I want to work. Luckily I had the  
2 freedom to come here today. I'm sure a lot of people  
3 don't because they have to pay their electric bills, you  
4 know.

5 As it is right now, I'm already around \$600  
6 behind on my electric bill. If I get \$1,000 behind on  
7 my child support, I lose my license. It takes priority  
8 over having electric to me being able to maintain  
9 everything. There's certain -- I have to have my  
10 excavator to pay for my house. There's certain things  
11 that take priority over certain things.

12 It just gets more and more difficult to keep  
13 up with everything especially with the increase on that.  
14 It would be kind of hard. I did a couple quick Google  
15 searches while I was listening to the question portion  
16 of everything and said that the CEOs of Liberty  
17 Utilities own 72 percent of the shares for the company  
18 and he's worth \$172 million. An average chairperson  
19 makes anywhere from 270 to \$313,000 a year. And I feel  
20 like it's just kind of like a cash grab. You know, like  
21 people like me, I go out and lift retaining wall blocks  
22 all day, break my back, whereas somebody in their shoes  
23 has the million dollars to invest to make a -- \$10  
24 million to invest and make a million dollars back if  
25 they're at their 10 percent they're requesting. That's



1 pretty much all I've got. I just wanted to share my  
2 position.

3 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Bilyeu.  
4 Appreciate you coming out today. I'll read the next  
5 three names. Dawn. It's a hyphenated last name. I  
6 apologize. Thomas Franiak. I apologize again. And  
7 Chuck Hirsch. I'll swear you in. Do you solemnly swear  
8 or affirm that the testimony you're about to give will  
9 be the truth?

10 MS. WHITCOMB-TLOMTEAUX: I do.

11 JUDGE HATCHER: Please state and spell your  
12 name for the court reporter.

13 MS. WHITCOMB-TLOMTEAUX: It's Dawn  
14 Whitcomb-Tlomteaux, W-h-i-t-c-o-m-b-T-l-o-m-t-e-a-u-x.

15 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms.  
16 Whitcomb-Tlomteaux.

17 MS. WHITCOMB-TLOMTEAUX: That's fine. Don't  
18 worry about it.

19 JUDGE HATCHER: Please go ahead with your  
20 comments.

21 MS. WHITCOMB-TLOMTEAUX: Obviously we're all  
22 in agreement, this rate increase is beyond belief.  
23 Personally I don't care what their stockholders get.  
24 Any stocks and investments in my life, we lost them. Oh  
25 well. When they didn't perform correctly. Oh well.

1 You either pool your money and reinvest or you move on  
2 and take your losses. Okay.

3 Having owned multiple businesses in my life  
4 with increases, rate increases, problems with shipping,  
5 you learn to adjust. Every business in the world has a  
6 formula of how much you should be charging to make a  
7 profit. Every franchise out there has a volume of  
8 people that need to be in your demographic before  
9 they'll sell you a million dollar franchise.

10 I had no clue in a year living in Ozark these  
11 rates were going to be this way. I can't get a straight  
12 answer when I do call. Can't get them to fix problems.  
13 Just went to level pay. They still haven't fixed it.  
14 Two months in a row. And then tell me I can call my  
15 bank and make sure my bank did it. I'm not paid by  
16 Liberty to do that. Please do the job you're paid for.

17 Please have an easy phone system so I can get  
18 a hold of somebody. Truly on top of all that my serious  
19 concern is that if the Commission allows Liberty to  
20 increase rates this way, our next one will be our gas  
21 bill and then it will be our water bill, because I can  
22 on everything else. My phone, yeah, I can check. I can  
23 work around that. All these other bills I can check.  
24 And back when I was on propane a year ago, I could price  
25 out my propane companies. I could see who is going to

1 give me the better deal. I don't get to do that with my  
2 electric bill. Where I live, even if I wanted to  
3 explore solar, I suddenly have an HOA. And I'm really  
4 sure they're not going to allow it. It's kind of in my  
5 bylaws that I signed. Everybody I know is on fixed  
6 income. I don't care if you're working. You get a 50  
7 cent an hour raise. After taxes that would pay your  
8 increase just on your gas bill. So what's the point.  
9 So that's it.

10 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. I appreciate you  
11 coming out today. Mr. Franiak.

12 MR. FRANIAK: Very good.

13 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Do you solemnly  
14 swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to give  
15 will be the truth?

16 MR. FRANIAK: I do.

17 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Please state  
18 and spell name for our court reporter.

19 MR. FRANIAK: My name is Tom Franiak, or  
20 Thomas, T-h-o-m-a-s F-r-a-n-i-a-k.

21 JUDGE HATCHER: Please go ahead with your  
22 comment.

23 MR. FRANIAK: I'm a small business owner from  
24 Ozark. I own Midwest Cabinets and Design. My current  
25 business has two locations. I also own a house in the

1 area. And fortunately for me that other than my Ozark  
2 location they are not on Liberty meters.

3 One of the things that I was considering as I  
4 was listening to testimony is that we are forgetting  
5 that as electric rates raise business owners and  
6 businesses will pass through those rates to their  
7 consumer. So even though we look at the rate of 40  
8 percent, which is what it would be for me, I would pass  
9 it on to my consumer. My consumer, in essence, pays  
10 that rate, because it becomes part of my operating  
11 expenses.

12 So is what happens is all these people behind  
13 me, they now get an increase in cost of living because  
14 every business in the area that is on that meter will  
15 raise their pricing. That's all I have to say. Thank  
16 you.

17 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. No questions.  
18 I appreciate you coming out today. Chuck Hirsch. Let  
19 me swear you in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that  
20 the testimony you're about to give will be the truth?

21 MR. HIRSCH: I do.

22 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Please state  
23 and spell your name for our court reporter.

24 MR. HIRSCH: My name is Chuck Hirsch,  
25 C-h-u-c-k H-i-r-s-c-h.

1 JUDGE HATCHER: Please go ahead with your  
2 comment.

3 MR. HIRSCH: I have two comments. I will keep  
4 it within the three minutes. First I'll give you my  
5 billing story. I moved into a newly constructed home  
6 last October in Ozark. I never got a bill. I called.  
7 They said oh, it takes five or six weeks, you'll get a  
8 bill. Never got a bill. I called. They said oh, be  
9 patient, you'll get a bill.

10 I went to the office. I said I'm not getting  
11 a bill. So the gal at the office looked up my account.  
12 She said they're reading your meter but it's labeled  
13 unbillable. Okay. She said there's a gal in the back  
14 office who's in a meeting who will send an email to  
15 Joplin. The last time this happened we had it fixed by  
16 the end of the day. Never got a bill. I ended up  
17 calling Joplin, talked to a very nice lady there,  
18 explained the whole thing. She said I'll take care of  
19 it. I said I'm not calling you again. If you want my  
20 money, send me a bill. Never got a bill.

21 So I looked up and I found you folks online as  
22 my calvary to help me. So I filed an informal  
23 complaint. Lo and behold within two weeks I have a  
24 bill. So shame on Liberty. Thank you to my calvary for  
25 getting this squared away. I'm assuming that my bills

1 are correct ever since then. Although they're high,  
2 I've learned that it's just expensive around here. So  
3 that's my billing story.

4 My point of asking you or my testimony is  
5 they're asking -- in round numbers they're asking for  
6 \$150 million, which is approximately a 30 percent  
7 increase.

8 The Commission is recommending 120, where did  
9 it go, 120 million which is a 30 percent, excuse me, a  
10 20 percent reduction of what they're asking for. So a  
11 20 percent reduction of 30 percent increase is a 24  
12 percent increase. So you're recommending a 24 percent  
13 increase. They're asking 30. You are our calvary. You  
14 are here to help us. I am asking you, I am even begging  
15 you to not even go to 24 percent. I'd love a zero  
16 percent. I can live with a single digit increase. So  
17 I'm asking you not to approve a 30, not to approve a 24,  
18 but something more reasonable we can all live with which  
19 would be in my opinion 10 percent or less. Thank you.

20 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Hirsch. I  
21 appreciate you. We do have a question. Go ahead.

22 MR. WILLIAMS: Hopefully just one. When did  
23 you get your billing issue resolved?

24 MR. HIRSCH: I moved in in October. It was  
25 somewhere probably February-ish.

1 MR. WILLIAMS: Of this year?

2 MR. HIRSCH: Of this year, yes. So again,  
3 when I went to the meeting in Ozark about the billing  
4 issues, I talked to one of the gals out front. It seems  
5 like they're reading the meter properly because I don't  
6 know, I'm assuming that it's correct. I hear these  
7 horror stories of people who are getting 150, 200, 300,  
8 400 percent increases in their bill. She told me what  
9 their system currently read for my meter reading. I  
10 went home to check it. If you've ever looked at an  
11 electric meter, there's more than one number that pops  
12 up on that baby. So as the numbers roll by, one of them  
13 was similar to what she told me. So I assumed we're  
14 correct. I haven't challenged it or looked into it  
15 since then.

16 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

17 MR. HIRSCH: You're welcome. Thank you all  
18 for being here very much.

19 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. I'll read the  
20 next few names on our list. Martin Montoya, Mark  
21 Sullinger, Monte Horning. Martin Montoya.

22 MR. MONTOYA: My name is Martin Montoya. I'm  
23 from the Sparta area, spelled M-a-r-t-i-n M-o-n-t-o-y-a.

24 JUDGE HATCHER: Let me swear you in. Do you  
25 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you're about

1 to give will be the truth?

2 MR. MONTOYA: Yes.

3 JUDGE HATCHER: Please go ahead with your  
4 comment.

5 MR. MONTOYA: I've only been in the area for  
6 about three years. Three years ago for some reason one  
7 of the winter months, I don't know if it's December's or  
8 January's, we had a \$500 bill. Can't figure out why.  
9 Every other month even on middle of summer, every other  
10 winter month it's 200 bucks. That's great. Got that  
11 resolved four months later where they actually give us a  
12 free month because we already paid so much.

13 But we ended up getting solar two years ago.  
14 My average monthly bill, summer, winter, doesn't matter,  
15 is about 40 bucks. I think the worst one I had was \$80  
16 except for that same month that that \$500 bill came in  
17 and it's still over 300 bucks. And the only answer they  
18 gave us, it's a fuel charge.

19 I'm on solar. I've got 20 panels. If I'm  
20 only paying 40 bucks and there's only a 7 degree  
21 difference, now my Mexican blood is from Arizona so I  
22 have no problem with the heat. And my wife is a cold  
23 blooded Missourian who has no problem with cold. But  
24 it's, what, a \$300 difference because of fuel. In two  
25 years gas hasn't gone up over \$3 a gallon. There's a



1 problem. And as far as it being resolved, it hasn't.  
2 We keep getting the whole oh, it's a fuel thing, it's a  
3 fuel thing and that's it.

4 In fact, I was just talking to somebody here.  
5 They brought it up to one of their employees. They  
6 couldn't even find my address. 557 Sunset Street,  
7 Sparta, Missouri. Not hard. I'm a gun owner. You guys  
8 can all share up. I don't care. But the point is they  
9 can't even find my address. They won't resolve the  
10 issues. It's an insane markup and they're asking for  
11 more. I'm all down with the whole capitalist thing.  
12 Give it to them but let us have somebody else we can  
13 choose. Anybody else. I don't care. Anybody.

14 You know, the whole point of our country is no  
15 monopolies is my point here. And I can't -- like I  
16 said, Sparta, like the other guy said, I get anybody  
17 else. I've called every other company. They say well,  
18 we don't own anything there, we can't help you, we can't  
19 give you electricity. I don't know what else to do. I  
20 can't get off the grid. It's illegal for me to cut the  
21 line, put up a windmill to add to my solar. What am I  
22 supposed to do? What is anybody here supposed to do?  
23 Just I'm also even though I work everyday 10, 12 hours a  
24 day, I may just be a Door Dasher, my wife may just work  
25 a normal blue collar job making \$16 an hour. If you

1 haven't looked at the numbers, unless you make \$40,000,  
2 you're in poverty, which means almost everybody in my  
3 town is in poverty. Just doesn't work. Thank you.

4 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Montoya. I  
5 appreciate you being here. Mr. Sullinger.

6 MR. SULLINGER: That's correct.

7 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Let me swear you  
8 in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony  
9 you're about to give will be the truth?

10 MR. SULLINGER: I do.

11 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. That is not your  
12 timer. Please go ahead with your comments.

13 MR. SULLINGER: Mark Sullinger,  
14 S-u-l-l-i-n-g-e-r. So first off I would like to thank  
15 you all for being here. I'm appreciative of Liberty  
16 having the willingness to all be here as well. You  
17 know, during the Q&A they should all probably get a  
18 purple heart after all these meetings. It's important  
19 that the public be able to speak, and I appreciate the  
20 fact that if you don't want to ask questions and you  
21 didn't sign up to speak, if you go to the psc.mo.gov,  
22 you can still type in your comments, put comments in  
23 there and they will see those comments. I would suggest  
24 or encourage everyone to do that.

25 So my questions are really more about not only

1 the rate increase that was asked for, because it is  
2 quite, you know, I don't want to use the word outrageous  
3 but it's very high compared to what happens. Is it  
4 something that we ask for 40 percent and we are happy  
5 with 20, right, is that the corporate strategy for being  
6 able to go to the PSC and get, you know, a negotiation  
7 going, right, and actually have less. If I look at the  
8 CPI, if I look at 2.7 for June, if I look at the GDP at  
9 3.0 by the end of the year, I look at where we're at  
10 from an inflationary perspective as well as wage  
11 increases and what people are able to take home. How  
12 are they going to be able to do a 40 percent increase,  
13 which I'm hoping is completely off the table. I agreed  
14 with the Office of Public Counsel that we really need to  
15 make sure we're looking out for the citizens of Missouri  
16 and in particular in this case, right, in Southwest  
17 Missouri and taking care of them in a manner that they  
18 are going to still be able to put food on the table four  
19 weeks out of the month, not three out of four.

20 If you take \$50, which was the average  
21 increase, you know, that was calculated in a lot of  
22 examples, that might be a week's worth of food for  
23 somebody on social security or fixed income. Right?  
24 What are we going to do? Are we going to send out a  
25 letter and say hey, we decided you can't eat the fourth

1 week of this month but go ahead and eat the first three  
2 weeks. Right. So we need to be careful about thinking  
3 on people who cannot afford this type of an increase,  
4 right. It is large.

5 So if I want to try and do something, I would  
6 also ask for transparency. Right. I think that there  
7 should be some significant audits to take a look at  
8 things, where are they, where is Liberty, what have they  
9 made, what are they really doing, what is the executive,  
10 the top 10, 15, what's their exec comp, right, what have  
11 they been able to do.

12 When we look at cap X on what they say they've  
13 spent, where did that actually go, right. We want 22  
14 new substations. Where are they? I don't want this  
15 generic plan, business plan. I want a very specific  
16 business plan that tells me, what, they received 46.7 or  
17 \$47 million out of the DOE at the end of 2023 under the  
18 Grid Grant. Where did that money go? How did you  
19 allocate that money? Where is it, right. Hundred and,  
20 whatever, \$15 million in profit after -- go ahead.

21 JUDGE HATCHER: Your time has expired, sir.

22 MR. SULLINGER: I can talk a long time. Okay.  
23 I'll stop but, again, thank you guys for all being here.

24 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. I appreciate  
25 you being here today. Monte Horning, Cherrie Horning,

1 Mark. It's a hyphenated last name for Mark Frese. I'm  
2 sorry. It is not a hyphenated name. That is your place  
3 of employment. Mark, I think it's Frese. Mr. Horning,  
4 let me swear you in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm  
5 that the testimony you're about to give will be the  
6 truth?

7 MR. HORNING: I do.

8 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. If you would  
9 please state and spell your name for our court reporter.

10 MR. HORNING: Monte Horning, M-o-n-t-e  
11 H-o-r-n-i-n-g.

12 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please go ahead  
13 with your comments.

14 MR. HORNING: My comments will be rather brief  
15 because you guys have already heard everything I wanted  
16 to say. I hope you were listening. I do want to say to  
17 the Office of Public Counsel, thank you for your  
18 position on this. To the PSC Staff, I cannot understand  
19 given the fact that there was an investigation how you  
20 guys would be willing to give any increase at this  
21 point. You guys work for us. See that emblem up there,  
22 united we stand, we the people.

23 I think you heard enough. I'm sure every  
24 other meeting you've been to has been just like this.  
25 So listen to the people, the people that you're working

1 for. You've already heard the trickle-down economics,  
2 the impact it's going to have not just with electric  
3 bills. And somebody goes to Walmart to get groceries.  
4 Well, Walmart's electric bills went up. They're going  
5 to pass that along. The gas station takes electric to  
6 pump the gas. Gas rates will go up. Everything that  
7 uses electricity that is a consumer product will have to  
8 figure out how they're going to offset this cost. And  
9 as one gentleman already said, most of that is going to  
10 be passed on to the consumer, the consumer that's  
11 already got a 40 percent electric increase that they're  
12 trying to figure out how to address.

13 So I'm asking you guys to hear us the people  
14 that have spoken and at this point deny this rate  
15 increase until Liberty gets it together. I'm a resident  
16 of Ozark. I've been to several of the aldermen meetings  
17 and tried to get them to address the streetlight  
18 situation in Ozark. Those are supplied and serviced by  
19 Liberty Electric, and the city tells us we the people  
20 when we go to our representatives and say why do the  
21 streetlights not work. Well, we called Liberty Electric  
22 and they won't do anything about it.

23 There's people that can tell you about outage  
24 after outage after outage. There would be people that  
25 would be much more inclined to not speak against a rate

1 increase if the service was not so horrible. That's  
2 really all I've got to say. Thank you.

3 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Horning. I  
4 appreciate you being here. We'll call Cherrie Horning.  
5 Thank you, ma'am. Let me swear you in. Do you solemnly  
6 swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give  
7 will be the truth?

8 MS. HORNING: Yes.

9 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you could  
10 please state and spell your name for our court reporter.

11 MS. HORNING: Cherrie Horning, C-h-e-r-r-i-e  
12 H-o-r-n-i-n-g.

13 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, ma'am. Please go  
14 ahead with your comment.

15 MS. HORNING: First of all, I just want to say  
16 thank you to everybody that showed up that's taken time  
17 out of their day and for all of you. And I'm probably  
18 not going to say anything either that you've not heard  
19 already. But I do feel compelled to be here and I do  
20 feel compelled to speak for a lot of people that feel  
21 like they don't have a voice.

22 Over my many years in the working field, I  
23 have worked with a lot of different populations. I have  
24 worked in group homes. I have worked in social  
25 services. I have worked in hospitals. I have worked in

1 billing. And I have seen a lot. And I have seen a lot  
2 of economic stress and financial difficulty with many,  
3 many groups of people.

4 I currently live in Ozark. We have lived in  
5 this area for over 25 years. We've lived in three  
6 different states and had lots of different utility  
7 companies. And I do have to say that we are Liberty  
8 customers for the electric and it is the highest  
9 electric bill I've ever paid in my life.

10 I was going to discuss some billing issues,  
11 but I don't feel that that's nearly important as the  
12 rest of what needs to be said. I volunteer a lot with  
13 social service agencies that are in Christian County.  
14 I've had many meetings with Christian County Homeless  
15 Alliance and with our local OACAC. If you want  
16 statistics and facts, they can give them to you about  
17 the homeless population in Christian County and what we  
18 call people living on the edge.

19 I see if this rate increase goes through we're  
20 going to have many, many more people on the edge and  
21 many, many more homeless that need to be served. And  
22 the issue with that is services are already being  
23 stretched.

24 I don't know if you are aware or not but local  
25 food banks and local food pantries have suffered a loss



1 in grants and money that they're able to get from  
2 government sources. Their funding has been cut. So not  
3 only is there an increase right now because of the  
4 economy. But if this horrendous rate increase would go  
5 through, I can't imagine what it would do to those  
6 people that are already homeless and the people that are  
7 just hanging on. There's another word for those people  
8 that are just barely hanging on are called the working  
9 poor.

10 This could be a young couple with children or  
11 people that have just -- people that are just starting  
12 out, they're young, or could be senior citizens. They  
13 don't have a lot to work with and their budget is being  
14 pushed from every possible direction. So you throw  
15 something like this at these people and they have no  
16 recourse. They make a decision like what's already been  
17 said. Am I going to put food on the table or am I going  
18 to heat the house.

19 JUDGE HATCHER: Ms. Horning, if you could  
20 finish your thought, your time has expired.

21 MS. HORNING: I was afraid of that. I just  
22 want to put some thoughts out there. Hopefully maybe  
23 something will come of it. Maybe it's time to have the  
24 state of Missouri request Liberty Electric, Liberty  
25 Utility Company be audited and see what's actually

1 happening with all these billing errors and all this  
2 extra money that's being made. It doesn't seem like  
3 it's running correctly, running like a business should.  
4 It's definitely not servicing their customers. And also  
5 --

6 JUDGE HATCHER: Ms. Horning, I really hate to  
7 cut you off, but we do need to move to the other  
8 witnesses. If you could please finish up.

9 MS. HORNING: I'm done. Thank you.

10 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. I appreciate you  
11 being here. We have a handful of witnesses left and we  
12 are coming up close on the three o'clock hour. Mark  
13 Frese. I certainly might have the last name wrong.  
14 They would work at Cox. Larry Johnson. Mike -- thank  
15 you -- Mieseler. Please come on down. I'll swear you  
16 in. Next will be AJ Barnes and then Paula Clark. Mr.  
17 Mieseler, do you solemnly swear or affirm that the  
18 testimony you are about to give will be the truth?

19 MR. MIESELER: Yes, I do.

20 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. And would you  
21 please state and spell your name for our court reporter,  
22 please.

23 MR. MIESELER: Sure. Mike, M-i-k-e, Mieseler,  
24 M-i-e-s-e-l-e-r.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Mr. Mieseler, please go ahead

1 with your comment.

2 MR. MIESELER: Well, we don't want to talk  
3 about the billing problem because it started back in '17  
4 for the most part. If you want to know all about it, I  
5 was at the Ozark -- so you can get it there. I just  
6 think what this company needs is some accountability.  
7 God sakes 150, \$2 million. Holy crap, man. I'm really  
8 nervous and ready to blow. Anyway, I just think they  
9 need some accountability. It just seems like there  
10 isn't any.

11 They should do better at it. I know there's  
12 ways to save money. I could go into some deeper things  
13 but I won't. And basically my billing problem, the SAP  
14 computer system, the billion dollar computer system, are  
15 we going to have another line item on our bill about  
16 that to pay for it over 25 years like the ice storm and,  
17 oh, the teardown of the plant. Tearing down a perfectly  
18 good plant. Why are we paying for it? I know it's all  
19 legislature. I get it. Apparently we need to change  
20 some voices up above.

21 But I guarantee you they probably cannot --  
22 well, the one lady was talking about basically can we,  
23 if Canada says no more electricity, can we generate  
24 enough to feed the customers here. I'm going to  
25 probably say no. Especially if the wind is not blowing

1 and the sun is not shining. So I just think there's got  
2 to be some accountability.

3 I understand that there's cost of doing  
4 business. I get it. And I know it takes a lot to  
5 change a pole out or something like that. A transformer  
6 is very expensive. You can't hardly get them. This is  
7 just ridiculous to get this chunk all in one whack. I'm  
8 just going to let other people speak, because I just  
9 completely went blank. But anyway, I'll just let  
10 everybody else speak. Thank you.

11 JUDGE HATCHER: I appreciate that, sir. Don't  
12 tell anybody it happens to me too. We don't have any  
13 questions. I appreciate you being here, Mr. Mieseler.  
14 Next we have AJ Barnes, and after that will be Paula  
15 Clark. Mr. Barnes, let me swear you in. Do you  
16 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are  
17 about to give will be the truth?

18 MR. BARNES: Yes.

19 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. And if you  
20 would please state and spell your name for our court  
21 reporter.

22 MR. BARNES: Yeah, AJ Barnes. That's  
23 B-a-r-n-e-s. My first name is Anthony, A-n-t-h-o-n-y.

24 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Barnes. Please  
25 go ahead with your comment.

1 MR. BARNES: I'm actually new to the area.  
2 Come from Springfield, Missouri. I moved about seven,  
3 eight months ago. I moved here with my daughter. She's  
4 actually in the room right now. Thinking this would be  
5 like a much safer environment, have her grow up in  
6 Springfield and then her family is in Christian County.  
7 One of the first things I noticed, first billing, you  
8 know, right away I contact Liberty, say hey, I want to  
9 put an on auto draft on my account. Customer service  
10 didn't seem to be very great. I went behind a couple  
11 bills. Not because there was a lack of money but  
12 because they just refused to take my account  
13 information.

14 The other thing was like very pressing. I  
15 noticed a power line just laying out in the middle of  
16 the street and so, of course, like immediate I'm going  
17 to call and say hey, can you guys -- they actually have  
18 a direct line where you can press like one or two. It's  
19 like if there's a down power line, like press one or two  
20 and then they'll take you to the person that will get  
21 that taken care of.

22 So first thing I do is try and get that taken  
23 care of. Few months go by. There's still a power line.  
24 And you know, she's seven, about to be eight. I teach  
25 her how to ride her bicycle. She rides her bicycle on

1 the street. I call two more times. Still nothing.  
2 There's just a power line just laying out in the middle  
3 of the street. Mind you I have to pay the bills by  
4 calling in. I can't get auto draft set up with them.  
5 Still waiting on auto draft actually currently. I  
6 believe I'm a month behind because I don't know when the  
7 bill is supposed to be paid. I just know that I have  
8 direct deposit and I also have a bank account like they  
9 just auto draft off my account. But the safety issue,  
10 which is like the most concerning to me, is it took  
11 seven or eight months.

12 When I finally talked to the lady on the  
13 phone, she tried to argue with me about might be the  
14 cable company or whatever. I said well, what if my  
15 daughter runs over this live power line and she gets  
16 electrocuted and dies. Is that just not your concern,  
17 you can't contact the cable company?

18 Surely enough, you know, I see about a week  
19 ago the line has finally been cut and stapled to the  
20 power line and I'm looking at it. It is not a cable.  
21 It does not go to the -- so I don't have television in  
22 my house. We go on lots of walks. That's another thing  
23 I'm noticing. We go on a lot of evening walks with me  
24 and my daughter.

25 We live like right downtown Ozark, Missouri.

1 Why are the streetlights not on, you know? I live in  
2 Springfield, City Utilities, which I don't know if you  
3 guys heard earlier today the Q&A they charge like a .9  
4 at City Utilities. Over here with Liberty they're  
5 charging a 1.3 which is a 30 percent more than the  
6 surrounding areas and yet they want to charge 30 percent  
7 more on top of that, so 60 percent per kilowatt hour,  
8 and they're not even doing their job.

9 They're not fixing the streetlights. They're  
10 not getting live hazardous power lines out of the  
11 street. I'm not even sure if it was really Liberty that  
12 cut the line and stapled it to the post because I could  
13 do that, my neighbor could do that. And there's two  
14 other houses in front of me and next door to me that  
15 also have children that play in that street. And it's  
16 just extremely concerning for the safety and welfare of  
17 the children in this city and this county. I just don't  
18 feel like that is a concern at all to Liberty.

19 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Barnes. I  
20 appreciate that. I don't see any questions for you.  
21 Appreciate you coming out today and letting us know  
22 about that. Paula Clark. Ms. Clark, let me swear you  
23 in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony  
24 you're about to give will be the truth?

25 MS. CLARK: Yes.

1 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And if you would  
2 please state and spell your name for our court reporter.

3 MS. CLARK: Paula Clark, P-a-u-l-a C-l-a-r-k.

4 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please go ahead  
5 with your comment.

6 MS. CLARK: Yes. I do realize that Liberty  
7 Utilities is owned by Algonquin Power and Utility  
8 Corporation. That they are physically buying utility  
9 companies throughout the United States, which if they  
10 ask for 30 percent to 40 percent increase here, they're  
11 also asking for that with all of the other utility  
12 companies that they are acquiring. So this is a profit.

13 The shareholders, Blackrock, Vanguard Group,  
14 just to mention a few. There's US small corps. Many,  
15 many other that you see listed on the New York Stock  
16 Exchange that they're making money. Here in this  
17 community we cannot afford that type of increase. I  
18 know when you ask for a 50 cents, maybe you would settle  
19 for 30, maybe you'd settle for 20.

20 In this area, we can't wobble like that. We  
21 can't be in a state of wondering what will our bill be  
22 next month. What will our electricity cost us next  
23 year.

24 I know for us, my household personally,  
25 there's just the two of us. We didn't turn our air



1 conditioning on until August of last year because we  
2 couldn't afford the electricity. It was like throwing  
3 money into the wind when we could use that money for  
4 other bills, we could use the money for savings, we  
5 could use the money to save for future events that might  
6 happen, the car might break down. So we run our  
7 household like a business, which I think that Liberty  
8 maybe should run their household account a little  
9 tighter.

10 This year because of the heat advisory,  
11 they're calling it I believe an extreme heat advisory.  
12 We do have our air on. We turned it on in July. Just  
13 this month we turned it on.

14 I have a picture if you want to see it of our  
15 thermostat at 11:12 p.m. last night. I took a picture  
16 of our thermostat just for this meeting. It's set at 78  
17 degrees at 11:12 last night. I never turn it below 78  
18 because of the cost of the electricity.

19 Think of the seniors. Think of the young  
20 parents in the community that cannot afford an increase  
21 like what you're asking for. I do have a question that  
22 I cannot figure out what it is, can't find an answer to.  
23 On my bill it's called the February 2021 storm and  
24 Asbury cost. This has been on my bill for some time  
25 now. What is that?

1 JUDGE HATCHER: Ms. Clark, I appreciate you  
2 being here to offer your testimony. I don't see any  
3 questions being asked of you. Myself and the  
4 Commissioners aren't allowed to answer questions for the  
5 same reason that we couldn't be at that question and  
6 answer portion because they're still making the  
7 decisions. They have to wait for the evidence to come  
8 in.

9 MS. CLARK: That's fine.

10 JUDGE HATCHER: However, this room is filled  
11 with people who can answer that exact question for you.  
12 If you would probably stick around to the end of the  
13 meeting I'm positive that we can find somebody to help  
14 you out with that.

15 MS. CLARK: Okay. My point being if you're  
16 still charging me for something that happened in 2021,  
17 why are you asking for an increase? The Missouri Public  
18 Service Commission, please consider the people in this  
19 area whether they're young, whether they're middle aged  
20 with a family, whether they're seniors, can we afford  
21 this much of an increase. Thank you.

22 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Clark. I  
23 appreciate you being here. We are down to our last six  
24 witnesses or so and we should finish right at about  
25 three o'clock. Thank you everyone for helping out.

1                   The next few names, I have Clarence Clark,  
2                   Jr., Earl Burke and Jerry Burtus. Clarence Clark, Jr.  
3                   Thank you, sir. I'll go ahead and swear you in. Do you  
4                   solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you're about  
5                   to give will be the truth?

6                   MR. CLARK: I do.

7                   JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. If you could  
8                   spell and state your name for our court reporter.

9                   MR. CLARK: Clark, C-l-a-r-k.

10                  JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Clark. Go  
11                  ahead with your comment.

12                  MR. CLARK: I wanted to thank you all for  
13                  being here. You're first line of defense for all the  
14                  people. When you think about all the people you  
15                  represent and help to protect, whether it's old people  
16                  not having heat or deciding whether they're going to eat  
17                  or whether they're going to pay their utility bills,  
18                  think about that too.

19                  I'm not going to be around a whole lot longer  
20                  myself. People get caught with a double whammy. When  
21                  you're going to buy, property values went down too. If  
22                  you increase the utilities much more than what they are  
23                  other places, taxes and utilities people always check  
24                  before they buy something. People get caught where  
25                  property values go down too if the utility is too

1 expensive.

2 But I think pretty well everybody has pretty  
3 well covered all the rest of the stuff. The company is  
4 buying other utilities all over the country. I'm sure  
5 you're all very familiar, you know, what all they do.  
6 You've been sitting in these deals before for the water,  
7 electricity, gas. They want to control everything looks  
8 like. Either they're very greedy or mismanaged, one of  
9 the two, or they wouldn't need all this money. That's  
10 about all I've got to say. Thank you all for what you  
11 do. Think about yourself. We've all got to answer  
12 hereafter.

13 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Clark. I  
14 appreciate you being here. Earl Burk. Thank you,  
15 Mr. Burk. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the  
16 testimony you're about to give will be the truth?

17 MR. BURK: I do.

18 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you would  
19 please state and spell your name for our court reporter.

20 MR. BURK: Earl Burk, E-a-r-l B-u-r-k.

21 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Please go  
22 ahead with your comment.

23 MR. BURK: I had questions and answers and  
24 didn't necessarily intend to appear before the hearing,  
25 but there's three things I should mention probably. I

1 did have the experience with billing. I hopefully think  
2 it's resolved. But I believe it was in the March  
3 billing area and April.

4 I numbered each one I received in the mail.  
5 There were 11. And there was one that appeared to be  
6 valid and I paid it. And the next month I did not get  
7 credit for it. And so they added two months together.  
8 So that's just my experience.

9 Secondly, there was a big challenge in  
10 electrical workers. I worked for them. Retired from  
11 the electrical industry or the utility industry and I  
12 know keeping linemen was a challenge.

13 Well, Liberty, they had the ability to do  
14 this. And I would have done the same thing. But a lot  
15 of guys went there because it was \$10 an hour increase  
16 just for that. Now, in the utility industry it's built  
17 in. Okay. If the supervisor sees that the subordinate  
18 gets that kind of increase, then there's always a  
19 built-in percentage that you've got to have differential  
20 based on HR rules. And so you see that any time that  
21 there is an increase in cost, it gets elevated on up.  
22 And so those costs are at the discretion of the company  
23 in a lot of ways, but yet having good linemen is very  
24 much important and of anybody in the utility I respect  
25 linemen very much having worked with them quite a bit.

1                   And then just something to consider. With the  
2 elevation in the cost, at these magnitudes none of us  
3 know how many people are saying that heat is elective  
4 already. What's going to happen when you do this even  
5 more.

6                   You know, Texas had the experience just a few  
7 years ago, wasn't very long ago. People froze in their  
8 homes. So just a question to consider. I appreciate  
9 your service and listening and thank you very much.

10                  JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Burk. I  
11 appreciate you coming out today. Jerry Burtus.  
12 Elizabeth Jones. Sam Peterson. Janet Johnson. Ms.  
13 Johnson, come on down to our podium and I'll swear you  
14 in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony  
15 you're about to give is the truth?

16                  MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

17                  JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And would you  
18 please state and spell your name for our court reporter.

19                  MS. JOHNSON: Janet Johnson, J-a-n-e-t  
20 J-o-h-n-s-o-n.

21                  JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please go ahead  
22 with your comment.

23                  MS. JOHNSON: Well, I've been listening to  
24 everybody today and I'm not going to go over anything  
25 else. It's just there's a lot that I learned today and

1 it just seems to me like -- I'm getting my house ready  
2 to sell. I've lived in Ozark for 22 years. My husband  
3 passed away a couple years ago. Now I'm on a, you know,  
4 I don't make as much as money as we used to. I think if  
5 this goes through I'm going to have to move somewhere  
6 else and not Ozark, somewhere I guess -- I didn't know  
7 that we were the highest in electricity because I can  
8 barely do electricity now. It's just me. I own my own  
9 home. But I'm raising my grandson who's ten. And I  
10 get, you know, social security and VA but not a lot. So  
11 like I'm not on the you can make this much to get food  
12 stamps and stuff like that. I make a little bit over  
13 it. So I can't get it or anything. You know, it's just  
14 I think I won't be the only one that leaves from the  
15 people I heard today.

16 And I'd like to stay here because my grandson  
17 has gone to school. He's starting middle school now.  
18 You know, he has all his friends here. But you know,  
19 it's between that or -- every night. You know, I just  
20 wanted you to know that that I'd probably move if it  
21 goes up. And you know, when you guys are all barbecuing  
22 this week, just think of me at home with our, you know,  
23 kids and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches now and what  
24 it's going to be like then. Okay. That's all.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Johnson, for

1 sharing those details. The last name I have on my list  
2 and then I will ask if there's anyone else in the crowd  
3 who did not sign up that would like to testify. Joshua  
4 Neal. Okay. That is all the names I have on my list.  
5 Is there anyone in the audience who would like to  
6 testify? This young gentleman is coming forward.  
7 Let me swear you in, sir. Do you solemnly swear or  
8 affirm that the testimony you're about to give will be  
9 the truth?

10 REPRESENTATIVE GRAGG: Yes.

11 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please go ahead  
12 and give me your name.

13 REPRESENTATIVE GRAGG: Representative Jamie  
14 Ray Gragg. Last name is G-r-a-g-g.

15 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Representative. Go  
16 ahead.

17 REPRESENTATIVE GRAGG: Thank you. First I'd  
18 like to start off by saying thank you for drawing the  
19 short straw, because I know you guys have probably had a  
20 very fun today. But just the fact that Liberty's  
21 definition, the definition of the word liberty is the  
22 state of being free from society from oppressive  
23 restrictions. That just kind of speaks volumes. Maybe  
24 they need to go back to the name Empire a little bit.

25 But I just wanted to come up and say for the



1 last hour or so, two hours now, you've heard, or some of  
2 you have heard, what the people behind me are saying.  
3 These are my constituents that live in my district. And  
4 some of them rambled because they're not used to public  
5 speaking.

6 Some of them had facts and statistics and  
7 spoke very eloquently. Ultimately everybody here shared  
8 from the heart and they shared what is true and what is  
9 real in their lives. I just ask that you please take  
10 that into consideration, take it to heart. This may be  
11 a large gathering of people in this room. They filled  
12 it up. But there are many of those who could not be  
13 here because of the time. Those restrictions also did  
14 keep people from being here being at noon on a workday  
15 of course first and foremost when they're at work trying  
16 to make a living. They couldn't be here for that.

17 So please consider that this is a small group.  
18 It's a full room but it's just a portion of those folks  
19 who would have been here had this not been at a  
20 restrictive time for them to be here. Again, thank you  
21 very much for being here and listening. I just hope  
22 that this does do some good. Thank you.

23 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Representative. I  
24 appreciate you being here. Having no further witnesses,  
25 we are ready for any closing remarks. Chair Hahn.

1 CHAIR HAHN: I just want to say what Ms.  
2 Horning said earlier which was thank you all for being  
3 here. You know, this was in the middle of the day. We  
4 know many folks work jobs and don't have the opportunity  
5 to come. We do have other local public hearings in this  
6 case in the evenings. We try to scatter our local  
7 public hearings across the jurisdiction to make sure  
8 that we can hear from everyone. So this evening we will  
9 be in Bolivar at 6:00 p.m. Tomorrow we'll be in Branson  
10 at noon. On Thursday we'll be in Aurora at noon and  
11 6:00 p.m. If you can't make the local public hearings  
12 in person, we also have virtual local public hearings.  
13 So again tomorrow night at 6:00 p.m. virtual you can  
14 call in and then also on Friday at noon. So hopefully  
15 you have an opportunity if you didn't or you have  
16 friends that want to comment you can let us know. Also  
17 you can go online and put your comments online and we  
18 can make those part of the case record as well.

19 You know, we know your time is very valuable  
20 and we take all the comments that were said today to  
21 heart. I also have family that live in this area. So  
22 it's actually a pleasure for me to be here and with you  
23 all today. On behalf of the entire Commission, we thank  
24 you for your comments.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Chair. I would

1 like to echo the Chair's thanks and also make sure and  
2 give you the details for submitting any written  
3 comments. If you would like to submit written comments  
4 or someone you know who couldn't be here would like to  
5 submit comments, you can go to the PSC's web page. And  
6 that's psc.mo.gov. In the upper right-hand corner of  
7 that page is a link that says submit comments, and  
8 that's the link that you want. Just make sure to  
9 include this case number. This case number is  
10 ER-2024-0261.

11 If you have questions and would like to  
12 contact the Office of the Public Counsel, their email is  
13 mopco@opc.mo.gov. That's mopco@opc.mo.gov. This  
14 hearing is now adjourned and we are off the record.  
15 Thank you all for coming out today.

16 (WHEREUPON, the proceedings concluded at 2:50  
17 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF MISSOURI )

COUNTY OF COLE )

I, Beverly Jean Bentch, RPR, CCR No. 640, do hereby certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the foregoing Public Service Local Public Hearing and that the transcript, pages 1 through 68, is a true record of my stenographic notes.

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

Dated this 4th day of August, 2025.

Beverly Jean Bentch

Beverly Jean Bentch, RPR, CCR No. 640

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