

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

In the Matter of The Empire District)	
Electric Company d/b/a Liberty, The)	
Empire District Gas Company, Liberty)	
Utilities (Missouri Water), LLC d/b/a Liberty)	
Utilities, and Liberty Utilities (Midstates)	<u>File No. AU-2021-0072</u>
Natural Gas) Corp. d/b/a Liberty Utilities)	
for Accounting Authority Orders Allowing)	
the Electric, Gas, Water, and Wastewater)	
Utilities to Record and Preserve Costs)	
Related to COVID-19)	

ORDER DIRECTING RESPONSES

Issue Date: November 18, 2020

Effective Date: November 18, 2020

On September 17, 2020, The Empire District Electric Company, The Empire District Gas Company, Liberty Utilities (Missouri Water), LLC, and Liberty Utilities (Midstates Natural Gas) Corp. (collectively “Liberty”) applied in a single application for four accounting authority orders (AAOs) related to COVID-19 for the four companies. The Commission subsequently approved the intervention of Midwest Energy Consumers Group, Missouri School Boards’ Association, the National Housing Trust, and Renew Missouri.

In order for the Commission to determine why it should not separate these four requests into individual files, the Commission will seek input from the parties. The Commission is concerned that the COVID-19 impacts will vary substantially due to industry, corporate structure, billing practices, or other factors. Moreover, the four companies have not yet explained how a single AAO application for four separate companies involves related questions of law or fact. All parties will be directed to respond to the following inquiries to the extent of their knowledge.

- 1) Do the four AAO requests involve related questions of law or fact? Please specify areas of dis-similarity as well.
- 2) If these four requests are kept in a single file, how are the parties intending to separately address the AAO requests for the four companies in testimony, exhibits, and witnesses? Explain how the parties intend to address the different utilities' provision of different services, different costs, and different customers. The Commission would also note that each utility has separate Commission approved rates for service, and separate tariffs. Also, while all utilities share some rules, electric, gas, and water utilities are regulated under different chapters of the Commission's rules.
- 3) Will any administrative efficiencies be gained by keeping the four requests combined, and do they outweigh the potential for disparate outcomes?
- 4) Assuming that the Commission divides this file into four separate applications, is it expected that the issues and witnesses would be similar enough to conduct a combined hearing?
- 5) Current interveners shall identify the AAO applications in which they desire to be parties.

The Commission will direct a prompt response to this order to more quickly determine how to process these requests given the proposed deadline for direct testimony of December 4, 2020.

THE COMMISSION ORDERS THAT:

1. All parties are directed to respond to the Commission inquiries stated in the body of this order no later than November 23, 2020.

2. This order shall be effective when issued.



BY THE COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Morris L. Woodruff".

Morris L. Woodruff
Secretary

Charles Hatcher, Regulatory Law Judge,
by delegation of authority pursuant to
Section 386.240, RSMo 2016.

Dated at Jefferson City, Missouri,
on this 18th day of November, 2020.

STATE OF MISSOURI

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

I have compared the preceding copy with the original on file in this office and I do hereby certify the same to be a true copy therefrom and the whole thereof.

**WITNESS my hand and seal of the Public Service Commission,
at Jefferson City, Missouri, this 18th day of November, 2020.**




Morris L. Woodruff
Secretary

MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

November 18, 2020

File/Case No. AU-2021-0072

**Missouri Public Service
Commission**

Staff Counsel Department
200 Madison Street, Suite 800
P.O. Box 360
Jefferson City, MO 65102
staffcounsel@psc.mo.gov

Office of the Public Counsel

Marc Poston
200 Madison Street, Suite 650
P.O. Box 2230
Jefferson City, MO 65102
opc@psc.mo.gov

Liberty (Empire)

Diana C Carter
428 E. Capitol Avenue, Suite 303
Jefferson City, MO 65101
Diana.Carter@LibertyUtilities.com

Liberty (MNG)

Diana C Carter
428 E. Capitol Avenue, Suite 303
Jefferson City, MO 65101
Diana.Carter@LibertyUtilities.com

Liberty (MO Water)

Diana C Carter
428 E. Capitol Avenue, Suite 303
Jefferson City, MO 65101
Diana.Carter@LibertyUtilities.com

Midwest Energy Consumers Group

David Woodsmall
308 E. High Street, Suite 204
Jefferson City, MO 65101
david.woodsmall@woodsmalllaw.com

**Missouri Public Service
Commission**

Jamie Myers
200 Madison Street, Suite 800
P.O. Box 360
Jefferson City, MO 65102
jamie.myers@psc.mo.gov

**Missouri School Boards'
Association**

Richard S Brownlee III
121 Madison
Jefferson City, MO 65101
rbrownlee@rsblobby.com

National Housing Trust

Andrew J Linhares
3115 S. Grand Ave
Suite 600
St. Louis, MO 63118
Andrew@renewmo.org

Renew Missouri

Tim Opitz
409 Vandiver Dr Building 5, Suite 205
Columbia, MO 65202
tim@renewmo.org

Enclosed find a certified copy of an Order or Notice issued in the above-referenced matter(s).

Sincerely,



**Morris L. Woodruff
Secretary**

Recipients listed above with a valid e-mail address will receive electronic service. Recipients without a valid e-mail address will receive paper service.