

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)

THURSDAY, JULY 24, 2025
12:00 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.

Recreation Center
126 West Hadley Street
Aurora, MO 65605

VOLUME 7
Pages 1 - 52

CHARLES HATCHER, Presiding
SENIOR REGULATORY LAW JUDGE

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

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

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3 Public Service Commission:

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25

1 The following proceedings began at 1:30 p.m.:

2 JUDGE HATCHER: Let's go on the record. Today
3 is July 24, 2025, the current time being a little after
4 1:30. The question and answer portion, which is the
5 part of the hearing that you just participated in, has
6 concluded.

7 The Commission divides a local public hearing
8 into two portions, the first being the question and
9 answer portion and the second portion being the
10 testimonial portion, which is what we're going to start
11 now. That's where the Commissioners are looking to hear
12 your experiences and your input.

13 The Missouri Public Service Commission has set
14 this time for a local public hearing to give members of
15 the public a chance to comment about Liberty's request
16 for a rate increase, and this is Case No. ER-2024-0261.

17 The Commission is made up of five
18 Commissioners. We currently have four with one vacancy.
19 The Commission's Chair is Kayla Hahn. There's also
20 Commissioners Maida Coleman, Commissioner Glen Kolkmeier
21 and Commissioner John Mitchell. The Commission
22 regulates the rates charged by public utility companies
23 in Missouri to ensure that those rates are just and
24 reasonable.

25 The Commission also regulates the quality of

1 service and safety of operations of public utilities.
2 With me today sitting next to me is Chair Kayla Hahn,
3 and on our phone connection we also have Commissioner
4 Glen Kolkmeyer and Commissioner John Mitchell and
5 Commissioner Coleman has joined us. I appreciate that,
6 Brian. Thank you.

7 At this time I'd like to go ahead and ask the
8 parties to introduce themselves. First for Liberty.

9 MS. CARTER: Diana Carter for the applicant
10 utility, The Empire District Electric Company doing
11 business as Liberty.

12 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And next for
13 Staff.

14 MS. JOHNSON: Tracy Johnson from Staff
15 Counsel's Office.

16 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And next for the
17 Office of the Public Counsel.

18 MR. WILLIAMS: Nathan Williams, Chief Deputy
19 Public Counsel, appearing on behalf of the public and
20 the Office of the Public Counsel.

21 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. I appreciate that.
22 We have several intervening parties. If any of those
23 are in attendance and would like to introduce
24 themselves. Seeing none.

25 This is a fairly well attended hearing. We do

1 wish to have everyone be given the opportunity to speak
2 to the Commission. So we will have to limit comments
3 tonight to about three minutes. What I'll do is I'll
4 set a timer. When that timer goes off, I'll let you
5 know that your time has expired and ask you to go ahead
6 and finish up your thought. This allows for you to make
7 your comments to the Commission but also to allow time
8 for your neighbors who have come out to this hearing to
9 make their comments as well.

10 We do have some sign-up lists, and I will be
11 calling those names first for witnesses. After those
12 names are done, I'll then open it up to anyone else in
13 the audience who has decided that they would like to
14 provide some comments. And I'll also announce at the
15 end of the hearing how to make comments to the
16 Commission on its website in case anyone had more
17 comments that they would like to make or know of someone
18 at home that wasn't able to be here.

19 Lastly, mentioning the question and answer
20 portion, I'd like to make sure that I state that the
21 Commissioners won't be able to answer any questions.
22 This is an ongoing case and they have not made any
23 decisions yet. They need to remain impartial until
24 after all of the evidence has been presented. With
25 that, I'll go ahead and start calling names.

1 Before we get to that, we have found one way
2 to save a little bit of time to make sure that everyone
3 gets a chance to speak to the Commissioners and that is
4 the swearing in. This is an official hearing and we do
5 swear in our witnesses.

6 So we have found that that takes about half a
7 minute to a full minute for me to swear you in
8 individually. So what I'm going to do now is ask for
9 everyone to raise their hand if you've signed up on the
10 list and I'm going to swear you in as a group. Do you
11 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you're about
12 to give will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing
13 but the truth? If so, please say I do.

14 Thank you. And when you come up to the
15 microphone, I'll ask you to spell your last name for our
16 court reporter. We will have a transcript of this
17 hearing being produced. And then I'll probably confirm
18 that you did agree to be under oath in your testimony.

19 The first name I have on my list is Carol
20 Jones.

21 MS. JONES: Thank you, sir.

22 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Jones. And is
23 Jones common spelling?

24 MS. JONES: Pardon me?

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Can you spell your last name

1 for the record?

2 MS. JONES: Yes. J-o-n-e-s.

3 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And to confirm,
4 you did agree that you're under oath in your testimony?

5 MS. JONES: Yes, sir.

6 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please go ahead
7 with your comments.

8 MS. JONES: Okay. I think that most important
9 is accountability for the company. They have been just
10 complete failures I perceive it in their billing
11 practices, in their dealing with the customer as in my
12 home when they were at my property using my water
13 without permission and then charging me for it. So I
14 would like to bring that up. They have a disregard.

15 I'm 75. I get social security and I get a 3
16 percent increase, 3 percent increase on my social
17 security. And I just think that the government would
18 run me out of the office if I said sir, I need a 35, 40
19 percent increase in my social security. They'd laugh at
20 me.

21 We can't afford this. The elderly people
22 cannot afford this. That this is only one aspect of our
23 life and this is outrageous, and the worst thing is the
24 confusion in the billing process and that kind of
25 failure. You know, the people that actually get out

1 there and work, wonderful people, but there's a lot of
2 damage being done and nobody is being held accountable
3 but us. We're paying the bill and it's time that you
4 all pay your own bills I think. That's mine. Is that
5 well enough?

6 JUDGE HATCHER: Yes. Thank you. I appreciate
7 you coming out this afternoon.

8 MS. JONES: Thank you.

9 JUDGE HATCHER: All right. The next witness I
10 have is Patty Kittrell. And I'm going to go ahead and
11 read the next couple names just so that you're prepared.
12 Linda Barton, Charles McDonohugh. I might mispronounce
13 some names. I do apologize for that. And Don Feer.
14 Ms. Kittrell, would you please spell your last name for
15 the court reporter?

16 MS. KITTRELL: K-i-t-t-r-e-l-l.

17 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Just to confirm,
18 you did take the oath to tell the truth in your
19 testimony?

20 MS. KITTRELL: Yes, sir, I did.

21 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please go ahead.

22 MS. KITTRELL: Okay. One of the concerns that
23 I have like everybody else, everything is going up. We
24 all know that. I took a look at what the average annual
25 income is for Springfield, 67,000. Coming down Highway

1 60, Republic, is 58,000. Marionville is 29,000. Aurora
2 is 43,000. Now, for me personally my annual income is
3 even less than Marionville.

4 One thing I did was I put solar on. Now I'm
5 fully aware that solar is not going to take care of all
6 of the electricity. But what I am charged, that's going
7 to go up. So what was the purpose of doing solar. As
8 it's been brought up before, I also checked on it. 18
9 percent of the population here in Aurora is 65 and
10 older. So you know, we could use some help, you know.
11 Sorry.

12 You know, like I said, with the solar, some of
13 that goes back to you guys, but that rate from what I
14 can tell isn't changing like what you're charging me.
15 And that I think needs to be fixed also. 39 percent is
16 fine but, you know, 82 would be better. But you know,
17 that's how it is. That's what I will hope you consider.
18 Thank you very much for your time.

19 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Kittrell. I
20 appreciate you being here this afternoon. Linda Barton.
21 Okay. We can circle back. Charles McDonough. Is it
22 McDonough or McDonough?

23 MR. McDONOUGH: I thought you guys were from
24 Joplin. It's McDonough. It's common spelling.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Maybe we can go

1 ahead and run through that.

2 MR. McDONOUGH: Did you want me to spell that?

3 JUDGE HATCHER: Yes, please.

4 MR. McDONOUGH: M-c-D-o-n-o-u-g-h.

5 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. I appreciate that.

6 And just to confirm, you did agree that your testimony
7 would be under oath today?

8 MR. McDONOUGH: I have some figures here, and
9 to the very best of knowledge they are accurate, yes,
10 sir.

11 JUDGE HATCHER: Okay. Please go ahead.

12 MR. McDONOUGH: The Social Security
13 Administration uses a Consumer Price Index to calculate
14 on an annual basis the cost of living for recipients to
15 try and keep their heads, all these gray heads above
16 water. Over the past ten years, we have seen two very
17 significant increases in social security, I believe in
18 '21 and '22, including the largest increase in history
19 for the social security cost of living.

20 All of those ten years added together do not
21 total 30 percent. The projected social security
22 increase for next year is currently calculated 2.6 to
23 2.7 percent. Most of that increase will be erased by an
24 exorbitant outrageous 11 percent increase in Medicare.
25 So most social security recipients will not see an

1 increase in their take-home next year.

2 According to salary.com, the senior executives
3 for Liberty, the chief accounting officer makes a little
4 over \$1.5 million. His compensation for 2024 was
5 slightly over \$1.5 million. Chief legal officer, \$2.1
6 million. The chief financial officer, \$2.9 million.
7 The president, over \$3 million and the CEO, \$5.8
8 million.

9 The five highest paid executives in the
10 company were compensated over \$15-1/2 million last year
11 in a single year. Now, I don't know if you all are in
12 that neighborhood. If you make over a million and a
13 half dollars per year, perhaps \$50 a month is not a big
14 deal. But for most of us down here we're going to have
15 to make some adjustments. And changing from Marie
16 Callender pot pies to Great Value pot pies is not going
17 to do it.

18 So I would just like to see Liberty get in
19 line with the national numbers that we're having to deal
20 with in every other part of our lives. Thank you.

21 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. I appreciate
22 you being here this afternoon. Don Feer.

23 MR. FEER: First of all, congratulations for
24 pronouncing it correctly. It's spelled F-e-e-r.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. And please

1 confirm that you raised your hand and were going to
2 state your testimony under oath. I'm tripping over my
3 tongue today.

4 MR. FEER: I did. First of all, I would like
5 to acknowledge the frontline folks for Empire and
6 Liberty. Thank have a pretty thankless job occasionally
7 when some of the folks that are upset give them a
8 jingle. They've been working diligently on their
9 billing issues, which are completely still screwed up.
10 I think it's a part of the situation that needs to be
11 recognized by the Public Service Commission in regards
12 to their rate increase, because if you haven't got your
13 ducks in a row, you don't really require a reward.

14 No reward to billing is correct. The models,
15 they talked about models. Models means you're educated.
16 That's a wonderful thing. Practical education is
17 probably more important upon many occasions. I don't
18 think your models work.

19 Once your house is in order, that's great, be
20 happy to talk to you about a rate increase and no, I
21 don't make a lot of money. I tell you what, the
22 gentleman that spoke about a rate increase perhaps put
23 in over three years is good, not 10 percent, because
24 that's going to work out to be 40 percent plus, maybe 6,
25 maybe 7 percent and do that over three years you might

1 have a better chance. Thank you.

2 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Feer. I
3 appreciate you being here today. The next name I have
4 on the list is Trudy Adair and then Carolyn Hurley and
5 then Diana Seifried. Ms. Adair, please spell your last
6 name for the court reporter.

7 MS. ADAIR: A-d-a-i-r.

8 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Just to confirm,
9 you did state that you'd be testifying under oath?

10 MS. ADAIR: Yes, sir.

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

13 MS. ADAIR: Okay. What has become apparent is
14 -- have made huge financial investments that we didn't
15 get to vote for and we are now having to pay for those
16 bad investments. Here's a statement. A major driver of
17 this rate case is Empire's investment in its new
18 Customer First software system.

19 Okay. So we're talking about the system that
20 just rolled over six months ago that everybody is still
21 reeling from and I'm still not satisfied because they
22 could never get their calculations correct. And the
23 lady from Liberty said several times today that they had
24 calculated incorrectly. On several different things she
25 was talking about, the water usage, the this usage, the

1 that. So how do we know they're not calculating
2 incorrectly now? We're still -- Why don't they get
3 their last situation townhall meeting straightened out
4 where we have this huge changeover in their new
5 investment software and it was a complete dud and
6 everybody is still reeling from that. It's really hard
7 to trust people that keep making errors.

8 And then this whole \$91 million that they
9 requested in November and then all of a sudden
10 recalculated and now they're asking for an additional 50
11 percent, \$152 million.

12 Basically what I personally think has
13 happened, they invested in the grain energy pipeline,
14 whatever it was, Trump gets in office and cuts that
15 funding off. Now they're reeling and charging all of us
16 for their bad investments just like when Wall Street
17 crashed in 2008, because of the housing market, and who
18 came and bailed them out? The government. But yet we,
19 the consumer, the poor little person on less than
20 40,000, \$30,000 a year fixed income we're having to
21 adjust to all of this.

22 It is completely unfair. The shareholders
23 don't give a damn. They're about the bottom line.
24 They're making millions of dollars and they keep
25 charging us for all of the taxes and the different fees

1 that can vary on usage charges. She even admitted that
2 they -- what all was it. It was usage charges that
3 fluctuate that they make errors on and then the 91
4 million they said they made a big error on their
5 calculation. Who is running that finance department for
6 Empire is what I want to know. Let's get some stats
7 from them. Let's see some comparisons of what they're
8 really paying out, what they're actually charging us
9 for, because all we see is this bullshit. We don't know
10 what they're really charging us for. So I think until
11 we get the last thing figured out let's deal with that
12 before we up 30 percent, which is outrageous. People
13 cannot survive on this. People cannot survive. It
14 needs to stop. That's what I have to say.

15 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Adair. I
16 appreciate you being here this afternoon. Carolyn
17 Hurley. Thank you, Ms. Hurley. Please spell your name
18 for our court reporter.

19 MS. HURLEY: H-u-r-l-e-y.

20 JUDGE HATCHER: And just to confirm, you did
21 state that your testimony would be under oath?

22 MS. HURLEY: Yes, sir.

23 JUDGE HATCHER: Please go ahead.

24 MS. HURLEY: Okay. I was here in June and I
25 went out there and was talking to the ladies out there

1 and they said well, this is your normal billing and
2 don't worry about it. I said okay. I came in and I was
3 accidentally sitting beside her. She looked at my bill
4 and went "ahhhh." I thought oh, there's something wrong
5 with my bill. So I went back to my last year in bills.
6 My bill every month is \$13.85. I thought that's not
7 right. So I went to Joplin and sat there for hours,
8 I'll even give you a copy of all this if you want, for
9 them to say well, we don't see anything, and the lady
10 come by, she looked down, and she says oh, you're not
11 being paid wattage. We're going to go for the last
12 month and we're going to look at the last month, because
13 it's up in the air somewhere between your meter and
14 billing and we're going to charge you for it so that you
15 can pay it. But we'll be nice and we will divide it by
16 four so it won't hurt you so bad.

17 I make \$1,000 a month and I get to pay a
18 year's worth of wattage. I don't think so. So I went
19 in July, in fact, July 8, and I paid my bill again. It
20 was \$13.85. So it's still in the air whatever it is. I
21 did the investigations. I investigated and I have a
22 picture of my kitchen light on. I have a picture of the
23 meter. I even have a picture of the internet that says
24 no meter exists for this account.

25 I've got electricity. Everybody else I talk

1 to goes "shut up, shut up." I'm going okay, but I'm an
2 honest person. I don't feel like I need to pay for the
3 last 13 months, because it's not my mistake, but I also
4 want to make sure I am heard that something is wrong.

5 Now, if August comes along and it's \$13.85,
6 yes, I'm shutting up. Would you like to have these?

7 JUDGE HATCHER: Yes, I would. I would like to
8 also make sure they aren't your originals. Okay.

9 MS. HURLEY: That's January through July.

10 JUDGE HATCHER: Okay. Would you go back to
11 the microphone. I have just a couple follow up
12 questions. Ms. Hurley, when did you notice -- I'm
13 sorry. You said you went back and looked at last year's
14 bills. What month is the start of your review?

15 MS. HURLEY: Okay. My house was 403 and that
16 one there is 405. I've built a house inside of my shop
17 and I went from a 110 electric to 220 and they said my
18 bill would go down. My shop was actually connected to
19 my house. So now I had two electric bills. But my
20 electric bill in July of last year -- okay. Let me back
21 up just a little bit more.

22 I called and asked for the meter to be put on
23 my shop. The gentleman, and I do not remember his name,
24 I'm sorry, I'm bad at names, he said that due to the
25 fact that they have a new system coming in that it would

1 be after that and I said I'm patient. Then I called
2 back two weeks later and oh, he's on vacation. I
3 waited. Two weeks later I called and they said oh,
4 you've already got a meter, and I went I do? So I took
5 a picture and I sent it to Liberty of the meter box with
6 a cardboard in it. And so the next day they came out
7 and when they did, they said you do not have a sticker.
8 So I got the commissioner to come out, you know, the
9 inspector to come out and he put a sticker on there.
10 The very next day they came out and they run a meter. I
11 had electricity. That was in July or June of '24.

12 JUDGE HATCHER: You were testifying about a
13 bill for 13.85. When did that start?

14 MS. HURLEY: July of last year.

15 JUDGE HATCHER: July of 2024?

16 MS. HURLEY: Yes, sir.

17 JUDGE HATCHER: And that's when you first
18 noticed it?

19 MS. HURLEY: No. I mean, I just thought it
20 was the normal bill. I noticed it when I came up here
21 last month and someone goes "ahhhh," and I went okay,
22 there's something wrong with my bill. So I go to
23 Joplin. I live in Miller. I drive to Joplin. I go is
24 there something wrong with my bill.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: I've got all that. I'm trying

1 to get the dates. Did you look at your June 2024 bill
2 to see if it was also 13.85?

3 MS. HURLEY: Yes, sir. It's in there.

4 JUDGE HATCHER: You said it started in July
5 2024?

6 MS. HURLEY: Yes. July is not in there. July
7 of 2024 is not in there. I can get that for you.

8 JUDGE HATCHER: I'm just asking if you know
9 right now off the top of your head did you look past
10 July's bill?

11 MS. HURLEY: There was no electric bill for
12 the shop.

13 JUDGE HATCHER: I see. Okay, okay. So these
14 are the beginning of the shop billings. I gotcha.

15 MS. HURLEY: Yes. I do believe, if I remember
16 right, my July bill of 2024 was \$13.81, July 2025 began
17 13.85. I gave you January through July.

18 JUDGE HATCHER: Is the July -- I don't have
19 the July bill. Is the July 2025 bill still 13.85?

20 MS. HURLEY: It should be in there.

21 JUDGE HATCHER: July. So am I understanding
22 that your second meter, your shop meter has always been
23 billed at 13.85?

24 MS. HURLEY: Yes, sir.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Okay.

1 MS. HURLEY: There's no wattage. But I have
2 lights. I just don't have wattage.

3 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Are there any
4 further questions? Thank you. Thank you, ma'am. I
5 appreciate you being here today. Ms. Seifried. Thank
6 you. And I apologize if I'm mispronouncing your name.

7 MS. SEIFRIED: You did well. It's Seifried.

8 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Would you please
9 spell your last name for our court reporter.

10 MS. SEIFRIED: S-e-i-f-r-i-e-d.

11 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, ma'am. Just to
12 confirm, you did state that you would be testifying
13 under oath?

14 MS. SEIFRIED: Yes.

15 JUDGE HATCHER: Please go ahead with your
16 comments.

17 MS. SEIFRIED: I was going to do more
18 questions. I guess I didn't get them answered so I'm
19 going to make them into a comment. The first one I
20 wanted to mention is am I to understand that if the
21 problems are not taken care of, the billing problems and
22 the customer care problems are not taken care of, that
23 the utility will not be able to get the increase? So
24 increase comes after those things are taken care of?
25 That's what I got from the last person speaking up here.

1 JUDGE HATCHER: I'm sorry if you're asking us
2 a question. Myself and the Commissioner can't answer
3 questions. That portion was earlier. But I would ask
4 that maybe you contact counsel for Staff or counsel for
5 the Public Counsel. They might be able to assist you
6 with your question.

7 MS. SEIFRIED: Okay. That question really was
8 my understanding that that's what's going to happen;
9 that the increase will not be available until all these
10 problems were taken care of. That's what I'm doing is
11 just stating a fact or what I thought they said.

12 This is a bleedover from the last meeting we
13 had. And I mentioned because there was no place for
14 people to go pay their bills. A lot of people don't pay
15 online. They don't have phones. They don't have a
16 card. And they use to pull up at the company and pay in
17 cash or check if they happened to have one.

18 We have this brand new beautiful building and
19 everybody was so excited because now we can go to the
20 big beautiful building. I walked up there to pay my
21 bill and the door is locked. We have no idea what
22 they're doing at that building. It's one of the newest,
23 biggest things we have in town, and I can't see why it
24 would be impossible to have some kind of an office with
25 one or two people that can accept people's payments

1 because sometimes our bills, by the way, you have no
2 problem with the post office maybe but we do. Sometimes
3 I don't get anything in my post office box and then
4 three days later it's stacked and maybe one of those is
5 an electric bill. So we run into problems probably with
6 our money going back and forth. So I would like to see
7 that they would use our new big building that people can
8 come and pay their bills here in Aurora and the building
9 might help solve some of the problems I would think.

10 The other thing is customer care. No business
11 stays in business with bad customer care. I've
12 encountered that. I have several properties. They get
13 mine all mixed up. I won't even go into it. I drug out
14 things to show you.

15 When I call, sometimes you get caught off let
16 me check, maybe you need to talk to someone else, that
17 type of thing. I feel like they have not been informed
18 on how to treat the customer or they do not know where
19 to go to get the answers. We're just looking for
20 answers. That's all we need is answers.

21 I'm just wondering if they're having any
22 training and nobody can answer this. This is a
23 suggestion. Having training by someone who is respected
24 in the company who knows how to train beautifully
25 instead of bringing in a high paid consultant. I've

1 seen that in companies. You bring in a high paid
2 consultant and the people just go -- to get somebody who
3 can train these people. If they're worthy of paying a
4 salary, get them trained, because what we're
5 encountering is the difference between customer care and
6 the billing and nobody -- it just breaks down. No one
7 can help us. And I have paid and paid and paid and I've
8 got -- I had a big package for the other night I could
9 bring all my bills. I had one that came in one day and
10 I looked at my bills, got them set. I got another big
11 envelope, which \$1.14 every time they send us a bill,
12 big one.

13 The next day I got this real thick one. It
14 had four more bills of the same thing. One of which I
15 had 230 something dollars on a bill and I started going
16 through all the pages and then it has at the very end
17 minus like I had already paid the 230. I tried to catch
18 on to that with customer service. No help.

19 My concern is customer service and billing.
20 They need to get together. They need to be talking to
21 someone. They say I know who can help you in billing,
22 I'm going to connect you and maybe you can get some
23 help. We all want to pay our bills. I don't want
24 anybody cutting off anybody's electricity. I know it's
25 against the law without some kind of notice. There's

1 just too many people in this town that are confused or
2 sometimes they can't pay their bill or they have no way
3 to pay their bill. So I guess I'm just going with that.

4 It's not just billing problems. It's
5 connected to the customer service. Thank you very much.
6 We appreciate that you all came to Aurora. We were just
7 amazed. Nobody comes to Aurora. Thank you for coming
8 and listening to us.

9 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you for being here this
10 afternoon. Nathan Burch and he'll be followed by Larry
11 Francis and Regina Payne. Mr. Burch, please spell your
12 last name for our court reporter, or is that Bush?

13 MR. BURCH: Burch is right. My handwriting is
14 terrible. B-u-r-c-h.

15 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And just to
16 confirm, you did state that your testimony would be
17 under oath?

18 MR. BURCH: Yes, sir.

19 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please go ahead.

20 MR. BURCH: My name is Nathan Burch. I'm the
21 pastor of Aurora Baptist Temple here in town. I'm here
22 representing the church as an entity but also a church
23 that has a large demographic of senior citizens. As a
24 church whole, we paid Liberty last year \$23,787. That
25 was our utility bill last year. We have the ability to

1 pay it. We have the resources. We're large enough
2 that's okay.

3 This year that will be an additional \$8,000
4 for 2026, if it goes through. In the Q&A session, I
5 used the example of phasing was the word when counsel
6 and I were talking. He rebutted with the idea that in
7 the long run that the rate would increase about 40
8 percent instead of 30 percent if it was done in phases.

9 Well, the problem with the car analogy is the
10 reason people borrow money to buy a car is they can't
11 afford \$50,000 on the day they sign the line. They've
12 got to go six years out to get the car. Right? I would
13 argue the same thing should be said about perhaps these
14 upgrades. Maybe these upgrades can't and shouldn't be
15 done overnight or maybe if they've already been
16 installed, that's not us. That was decided by the
17 company as a whole.

18 We have a Christian school that we're
19 partnering with that takes ownership -- or should I say
20 is able to take over the property in a few weeks. We
21 already negotiated a contract with them that we're using
22 the building ten months a year, four days a week.

23 After that contract was written and signed, I
24 got a letter in the mail stating that utilities were
25 going up 30 percent. Now I have to go back to that

1 superintendent and that principal and we need to revisit
2 this contract, and the only way they're probably going
3 to be able to stay open is if they pass down some of
4 these expenses to their parents of the students. Right.
5 And I understand that Liberty has costs themselves and
6 it always finds its way downhill. I understand
7 business.

8 First of all, I do want to say that Liberty's
9 response during these storms was phenomenal. Let me put
10 that on record that they were great. I also brought up
11 in the Q&A about could we see the evidence of a profit
12 and loss statement regarding Aurora. And I was told
13 that basically they don't calculate it based on areas.
14 That sounds ridiculous. The idea that they can't tell
15 us what our costs are to them and how much revenue they
16 make. That sounds ridiculous that we cannot see how
17 much of a blessing or a curse we are to Liberty as a
18 whole. I'm not talking about Empire. I'm talking about
19 the whole conglomerate. We can use the phrase parent
20 company all we want, but it's all one unit.

21 The third thing I would have to say is this is
22 from the Liberty website. Customer centric. Foster a
23 positive internal and external customer experience at
24 every stage of the customer journey to build customer
25 loyalty and satisfaction. I don't feel with the recent

1 billing issues that that necessarily has been
2 accomplished. And there's some times in business where
3 maybe you don't cash in chips you don't have. And I
4 would say right now Liberty has not earned the good
5 faith of its shall we say clients or customers that we
6 can trust what they are asking would go to what they're
7 wanting to put it to and if it's really necessary.
8 There's just not enough clarity and there's not enough
9 transparency and it's a little too rough right now in
10 the sense of the customer and client relationships.

11 The last thing I'll say right under customer
12 centric they say integrity. Always honest. We do the
13 right thing and adhere to a moral and ethical principle
14 for self and team. I would ask the question if 30
15 percent is an ethical and moral number.

16 I present a budget to the church every year.
17 Sometimes we have a high increase.

18 JUDGE HATCHER: Mr. Burch, your time has
19 expired. Can you please finish up?

20 MR. BURCH: I can. I would just say this. I
21 have an ethical and moral obligation to really count the
22 cost to the church with the budget that we present.
23 I've got to stand and give account for it. Right now I
24 don't see any accountability, I don't see any
25 transparency, and I feel maybe this would not be the

1 time to put this through.

2 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. I appreciate that.
3 If we can keep the extra comments from the crowd down
4 though, that will help us make sure that our neighbors
5 get to testify as well.

6 The next name that I have on the list is Larry
7 Francis. And then Regina Payne and then Tony Kennedy.
8 Larry Francis. All right. We'll circle back. Regina
9 Payne and Tony Kennedy. Would you please spell your
10 last name for our court reporter, sir?

11 MR. KENNEDY: K-e-n-n-e-d-y.

12 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Just to confirm,
13 you stated earlier that you would be testifying under
14 oath?

15 MR. KENNEDY: Yes.

16 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please go ahead.

17 MR. KENNEDY: So I came to talk about we're
18 all feeling concerns about Liberty. It's become a part
19 of every conversation. We have meetings in public. We
20 have meetings with community members. We go to events,
21 online, in the news. And a lot of this has really
22 kicked up in pace obviously due to the rate increase
23 request and some loose ends from the billing hearing
24 from June.

25 It's hard for them to not feel a little

1 helpless, especially for our neighbors on fixed income,
2 the non-profits that work hard to try to squeeze dollars
3 to help people stay afloat, keep them from digging a
4 deeper hole or one they can't get out of. For many of
5 them they can't just go get a second job or come out of
6 retirement and go back into the workforce. So they lose
7 something and we all do.

8 They are now no longer able to participate in
9 a lot of the activities and the events because they
10 can't afford it or they're not a part of the local
11 economy any more. You know, we're not alone. This is
12 our community, a lot of surrounding communities, Liberty
13 customers across the state. We see it on the news. We
14 go to different areas, southeast, everywhere you go it's
15 the same message.

16 Part of the problem I have is the language we
17 hear from Liberty not necessarily meeting up with their
18 actions, especially in terms of energy efficiency and
19 savings. You see time and time again they're making
20 strides to increase efficiency in diversity in power to
21 lower prices. Yet we haven't seen a meaningful decrease
22 ever that I've seen.

23 Each time this kind of thing happens it's a
24 new normal. We set the bar and we move up from there.
25 I want to go over a couple quotes that I pulled from the

1 Liberty Utilities central website to give you a little
2 bit of background on what I mean by that.

3 So starting with the 600 megawatt wind energy
4 project that went in three fields that went in from
5 December 2020 to May '21. In that article they say
6 Liberty's transition to clean renewable wind energy
7 protects our environment through lower carbon emissions
8 and saves customers money.

9 The stated estimates are 169 million over 20
10 years and 300 million over 30. Riverton transmission
11 project. This transmission will be a benefit to all of
12 our customers. It opens the flood gates to allow more
13 flow of energy reducing transmission costs. Big picture
14 view. Can be very controversial topic overall. I think
15 it's a good thing he said, but the access to the cheap
16 power we have from Liberty's wind farms also means lower
17 fuel costs. And I could go on through these. These are
18 all available right there on the website.

19 Each one kind of ends a discussion in we're
20 lowering costs, improving efficiency, and we're here to
21 ask for 40 percent increase.

22 So finally I want to highlight a small
23 paragraph from a letter I recently wrote. It reads we
24 are still awaiting resolution on the prior hearing
25 issues as billing madness continues and communication

1 has yet to see measurable improvement. While I wish for
2 every utility in Missouri to find success, I want to see
3 Missouri reward those who are truly operating within the
4 spirit of offering safe and reliable utility services at
5 just, reasonable and affordable rates. And I would be
6 remiss if I didn't thank the Commission for holding
7 these hearings because if you didn't I don't think we
8 would be heard at all. We wouldn't have a platform. So
9 thank you for that. But I would urge you to consider
10 that last line in my statement above. Safe and reliable
11 utility services at just, reasonable and affordable
12 rates. That is the first bullet point for the mission
13 statement of the Missouri Public Service Commission.
14 Thank you.

15 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. I appreciate
16 you being here today.

17 MR. WILLIAMS: May I ask a question? Are you
18 here in your individual capacity?

19 MR. KENNEDY: I am here in my individual
20 capacity, yes.

21 MR. WILLIAMS: You do have another role, don't
22 you?

23 MR. KENNEDY: I do.

24 MR. WILLIAMS: And what is that?

25 MR. KENNEDY: Mayor of the City of Aurora.

1 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

2 MR. KENNEDY: Thank you.

3 JUDGE HATCHER: Thanks, Mr. Williams. The
4 next name I have is Alda Ableto (phonetic spelling.)
5 The first starts with an A and the last name appears to
6 start with an A. Does that sound familiar to anyone?
7 We'll move to David McLand (phonetic spelling.)
8 Tonight? Okay. Sheralin (phonetic spelling) Harper.
9 And following that will be Roy Russell and Jimmy Turner.
10 Thank you, Ms. Harper. If you would spell your last
11 name for our court reporter.

12 MS. HARPER: H-a-r-p-e-r.

13 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And just to
14 confirm, you did state your testimony would be under
15 oath?

16 MS. HARPER: Yes.

17 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please go ahead.

18 MS. HARPER: Okay. I am a mom of four still
19 at home. In the wintertime my electric bill runs about
20 \$600 a month. I'm all electric. A 30 percent increase
21 would be almost \$800. Where do I get that other \$200
22 from? Do I not buy my kids school supplies? This is
23 for like four months. So it's actually \$800. Do I not
24 buy my kids shoes? Do they have to go to school
25 barefoot? Do I not feed my kids? This is a lot of

1 money. I cannot afford that.

2 You know, I'm probably not the only working
3 mom that can't afford it, but I was blessed to have the
4 day off. Everybody else is probably at work. We can't
5 afford this. You know, I have to cut back. I have to
6 -- what can we live without in order to pay my bills. I
7 look at this request and is this really necessary? Like
8 it looks like unnecessary expenses to me.

9 There was one part of it that would probably
10 benefit us. Do we have to do all of this at once? Can
11 we work on one project at a time like others have said.
12 Like I couldn't even believe they asked us of this when
13 they don't even have the billing issue fixed. I live in
14 Miller so I'm not affected like Aurora citizens are.
15 But that's just a lot of projects when you don't even
16 have one that's actually good right now, you know.

17 I just -- I can't wrap my head around it. It
18 is too much, way too much. And I mean, I work. My
19 income is a lot more than these guys. How are they
20 going to afford it? Please don't do this. Please do
21 not give Liberty 31 percent more. We can't afford what
22 we have right now. We're struggling. That's all.

23 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Harper. I
24 appreciate you coming out this afternoon. The next name
25 I have on the list is Roy I believe it's Russell. Then

1 Jimmy Turner and David Brinley. Is there a Roy?
2 Mr. Turner, come on down. Please spell your last name
3 for our court reporter.

4 MR. TURNER: My last name is T-u-r-n-e-r.

5 JUDGE HATCHER: And just to confirm, you
6 stated you'd give your testimony under oath?

7 MR. TURNER: Yes, I did.

8 JUDGE HATCHER: Please go ahead.

9 MR. TURNER: I am a local business owner. I
10 own the bowling alley here in Aurora, and we provide a
11 complete entertainment for the people in our city. An
12 increase of which you're asking is going to raise my
13 electric bill roughly about 14 to \$1,500 a month.

14 Now, I'm here not just for my business but for
15 all business in the area. You think you're just
16 charging these people 30 percent. By the time you tack
17 on people like me that have to raise our prices, people
18 at the grocery stores have to raise their prices to keep
19 their freezers going, you're going to have to tack on
20 another 10 to 15 percent to those people as well. And
21 you have a lady over here crying she can't put shoes on
22 her kids' feet. How is she going to buy food when we
23 have to raise our prices.

24 I'm going to be the first business to go,
25 because the first thing they're going to cut out is

1 entertainment because they're not going to have it we
2 keep raising these prices. I'm about priced out. Right
3 now I'm going to be charging more than people going to
4 Springfield on a different electric company to be able
5 to keep their business open and I'm going to be more
6 than that. So it's cheaper for them to drive to
7 Springfield to do whatever they want to do than it is to
8 do in our local community and that hurts us, because
9 that's tax money out of our community. That's people
10 having to move out of our community because there's
11 going to be less jobs.

12 I employ nine people right now. What you're
13 proposing on me is about \$20,000 a year. That's two to
14 three part-time kids that work for me I'm going to have
15 to let go in order to stay in business.

16 So all these people that are on fixed incomes,
17 how are they going to be able to afford your electric
18 bill and afford to go to the grocery store because the
19 grocery store has now went up. Gas prices went up.
20 Everything runs on electricity.

21 So you're not just raising us 30 to 40
22 percent. You're raising approximately about 50 percent
23 by the time you look at what it's going to cost
24 everywhere else. You're going to cost me my life
25 savings I've poured into this businesses three years ago

1 to buy this to keep it open. It's an icon in this
2 community for almost 60 years, and it could possibly go
3 away over this because people aren't going to have the
4 disposable income to come see me. I'm going to be the
5 first one to be cut out. Then they're going to start
6 figuring out how are we going to buy groceries, how are
7 we going to go out to eat. You're going to close down
8 lots of different things in this community and it's
9 going to be a ghost town.

10 So I think that with the billing practices and
11 everything else if you can't get that right and you
12 can't bill us right, how can you charge us more because
13 obviously if you're not billing us right that 30 percent
14 could be 40, 50 percent. Not just the 30 because if my
15 bill is supposed to be \$500 and my bill because of your
16 billing practices is \$600, 30 percent on that \$600 is
17 another \$30. Well, you take that for the whole
18 community, it's going to hurt everybody.

19 This is a poor community. This is not like
20 Springfield or Kansas City or big areas where everybody
21 is making 20, \$30 an hour. A lot of the jobs in this
22 town are minimum wage, not much above minimum wage.
23 They can't afford -- We've got lots of retired community
24 been here all their lives. They're going to have to
25 think about selling their homes, moving into places that

1 they can afford.

2 And they shouldn't have to do that because you
3 guys overspend. Thank you.

4 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Turner. I
5 appreciate you being here this afternoon. The next
6 names we have are David Brinley, Brad Gray, ED Whitty.
7 Mr. Brinley.

8 MR. BRINLEY: Brinley, B-r-i-n-l-e-y. And I
9 have received the oath.

10 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Please go
11 ahead with your statement.

12 MR. BRINLEY: Well, to start off with, let's
13 give a simple practical example that everyone can
14 understand and get behind. Social security, which a lot
15 of people in these small communities, they're retirement
16 communities and they are, particularly Marionville which
17 has the Methodist Manor there. It's a retirement
18 community.

19 So I had a pretty good job. I get pretty good
20 social security. But with what I make, the increase
21 will amount -- my total electric bill will amount to
22 about 11 percent of my social security. My wife gets a
23 little bit less than half of my social security, which
24 is typical of the wife versus the husband.

25 She will -- It will amount to a 22 percent of

1 her social security check just to pay for the electric.
2 Almost a quarter of her social security. Men typically
3 die before women. So whenever she's alone, it's going
4 to be like the typical joke about little old lady on
5 social security eating cat food. So is she going to be
6 able to get the meaty Friskee's or is she going to be
7 stuck with the cheap stinky stuff? My wife doesn't even
8 like cat food. But that's literally what it's going to
9 boil down to.

10 Can you make it on social security with a
11 quarter of your income going just for the electric bill.
12 Where is your groceries, rent, taxes, property taxes,
13 car, gasoline, everything else.

14 So beyond the practical example, you have the
15 problem of mismanagement or misuse of things. As in,
16 for instance, they bought all new electric meters when
17 they took over. Never even used them. But they billed
18 us for them. We had to pay for them. They've never
19 been used.

20 States, other states -- and business should be
21 local. They should be -- Their profit and loss should
22 be within, confined to the state or the area of the
23 state where they're doing business. But we're paying
24 for mistakes that were made in Texas and we'll be paying
25 for them for the next several years because this utility

1 has more than one area they work in.

2 We're also paying for some California fire
3 damage for them. That has nothing to do with us. Their
4 profit and loss is here. Whatever they invest in
5 equipment is here. If they use the equipment, fine. If
6 they don't use the equipment, we never should have had
7 to pay for it, and we should not be paying for expenses
8 they're incurring in other areas, just here. We have
9 some occasional ice storm maybe once every ten years
10 here. That's a viable cost. But all these for outside
11 areas is not. And we should not have to be -- have that
12 included in what they're wanting for their rate
13 increase. That's it.

14 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. I appreciate you
15 being here this afternoon. The next name we have is
16 Brad Gray followed by ED Whitty and then Billy Ruddock.
17 Thank you, sir. I knew it was a couple and then May
18 Ruddock. Brad Gray. ED Whitty. Mr. Ruddock. Thank
19 you, sir. If you would please spell your last name for
20 our court reporter.

21 MR. RUDDOCK: It's R-u-d-d-o-c-k.

22 JUDGE HATCHER: Just to confirm, you did state
23 you'd be testifying under oath?

24 MR. RUDDOCK: Yes, sir.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Please go ahead.

1 MR. RUDDOCK: I am disabled. I am retired.
2 About two years ago I about died. My wife, we spent our
3 whole savings, maxed out our credit cards so I could
4 live today. One of my medicines is going to cost, if I
5 didn't have my insurance I'm paying monthly for, would
6 cost me \$40,000 a year and I can't afford that. But I
7 got my insurance.

8 You let this rate increase go through, I'm not
9 going to be able to afford to keep my insurance and
10 therefore I cannot live like this. If you allow this
11 rate increase to go through, me and my wife will sell
12 our house, we will be forced to sell our house and move
13 out of this community. I have been here since 1986, and
14 I like this community but I will not stay under Liberty.

15 When her sister, who lives in a different part
16 of the state, when she heard about the rate increase,
17 she was just befuddled about it. We have had people
18 tell us that when they sell their house they will look
19 for a place that Liberty does not own the electric
20 company, because they can't afford it.

21 You cannot ask people to pay another 40
22 percent on what they are paid now in this community
23 because I am not the minority here. I'm not the only
24 one that's disabled. I'm not the only one that's living
25 on disability and having to pay. I don't even have a

1 car payment now. I don't have a car payment and I'm not
2 going to buy a new car because I can't afford it.

3 I pay a little bit extra each month on my
4 electric bill so I can be able to afford my medicines
5 and be able to afford to go to Kansas City for my
6 doctors' appointments and my doctors' appointments in
7 Joplin. I've been to the doctor over 20 times this year
8 to be able to just stay alive. I'm not going to be able
9 to have this buffer on my electric. I've been paying
10 just a little bit extra each month where I can keep my
11 electric bill down. This is going to eat it, way eat it
12 up. Then I've got to figure out what I'm going to not
13 take as far as medicines.

14 I might have to figure -- we're going to sell
15 our house and move. That's all I've got to say. My
16 wife has something to say.

17 MS. RUDDOCK: Same last name, R-u-d-d-o-c-k.

18 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, ma'am. To confirm,
19 you also stated you'd be testifying under oath?

20 MS. RUDDOCK: Yes.

21 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Go ahead with your
22 comments.

23 MS. RUDDOCK: When we received that notice
24 that it was going to be 39.5 percent, 39.45 percent
25 increase, in our range because the government and

1 everybody said you need to, put whatever you can into
2 your houses to keep your utilities down lower, to not
3 use as much electricity. We did that. We put the good
4 windows in. We put all the insulation in. We don't run
5 an air conditioning and the heater to where we think
6 we're at the beach or in Alaska or something. We try to
7 be extremely careful with how we use our electricity.
8 It's an expensive bill that comes at every single month.
9 They want us, who are trying our hardest not to have an
10 expensive electric bill, that's following the rules, to
11 not waste electricity. To pay 39.45 and the person that
12 doesn't have the insulation that maybe -- sorry, his mom
13 would like to have the heater on and the screen door
14 open trying to heat the house. We don't do that. We
15 don't live like that. They want us to meet up almost to
16 the price that they pay when they're not being good
17 stewards of what they're receiving. That's one problem.

18 Another problem is I had to go to Springfield
19 a while back and I was at a car dealership and the
20 gentleman, the dealer said to me where are you from? I
21 said Aurora. He goes oh, the town with the most
22 expensive electricity there is. Everybody knows.
23 Everybody knows Liberty. Everybody knows they don't
24 want Liberty.

25 You can go down the road just a couple miles

1 and go to Barry County. They don't have these kind of
2 rates. In fact, we had a friend out there that was
3 doing housework that have big, big massive window
4 leaking air one winter. They were having to fix it and
5 replace it. Our electric bill was 300. His was 90 and
6 the wind was blowing through his house. Ours was not.
7 Ours was not.

8 Another thing my dad had his own business for
9 a long time. When he needed to fix something in the
10 business, he took it out of his money. It was his
11 business. He wasn't getting grants. He wasn't getting
12 tax breaks. He wasn't getting all the stuff that these
13 utilities are getting. And then going we're going to
14 bring all this money in from the government but yet
15 we're going to make you pay also. And we're going to
16 keep our money and live our lavish style as a CEO or
17 whoever while you guys suffer.

18 We don't mind taking your little bit of money.
19 Just don't take any from ours. It's our company. But
20 we will not spend our money to do it. You-all, we are
21 not all dumb because we don't make a ton of money. And
22 that's how they're treating us like we would have no
23 idea. Because it is a monopoly, which it is a monopoly,
24 we have no choice. We have no choice.

25 They say you're going to pay 39.45 increase.

1 Too bad so sad. Where else are you going to go? Where
2 are you going to go? You're going to have sell your
3 house, pack up and move and go somewhere else. That's
4 what you're going to have to do or you're going to pay
5 this 39.45. And he's right. Not counting my medical,
6 just his alone, no one has taken that into account. The
7 people that literally are suffering trying to figure out
8 the medical costs and everything else besides the
9 regular living. We're not going out and enjoying fun.

10 I'm sorry to the guy who has the Strike Zone.
11 We can't do that. We've already cut everything down to
12 nothing. And they want us to pay another 39.45 so the
13 CEO and everybody else can sit comfortable while they're
14 still getting their breaks from the government. It's
15 not right. And asking us to foot it is not right. You
16 really need to really look into it and not just consider
17 that they want to make sure that they're living their
18 lavish lifestyle, because that's what it boils down to.
19 That's their company. They need to invest in their
20 company, not expect us to invest into it wholeheartedly,
21 pay for everything where they do nothing than just take
22 in the money. There's a problem with it. Thank you.

23 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. I appreciate you
24 both being here today. The last name I have on the list
25 is Jeff Carner. After that I'll open it up to the

1 audience anyone who did not sign up that would still
2 like to testify. Mr. Carner, I appreciate your
3 patience. Please spell your last name for our court
4 reporter.

5 MR. CARNER: C-a-r-n-e-r. I swore in.

6 JUDGE HATCHER: Excellent. Please go ahead
7 with your comments.

8 MR. CARNER: Thank you all you guys for being
9 here and the committee that's listening to this.
10 Hopefully they are hearing this and taking it to heart.
11 I feel for the Empire reps that were up here. I
12 wouldn't want to be in their shoes at meetings like
13 this. I didn't have the heart to question and answer.
14 I thought about asking them if they personally thought
15 this proposal was fair and ethical, but I knew that
16 would put them in a bad situation. So I didn't ask them
17 that.

18 How I came to be here, I got the notice in the
19 mail like everybody did. I didn't pay a lot of
20 attention to it. Liberty is wanting another little pay
21 hike. You know, what am I going to do. Didn't pay much
22 attention to it. And I've got my house in Ozark for
23 sale. And I was showing it to a prospective buyer.
24 They really liked it. Him and his wife really liked it.
25 About half, three-quarters of the way through me showing

1 it to them, he's like who's your electrical provider. I
2 said Liberty. Whoa. He had a cow. I didn't want to
3 hear that. I did not want to hear that. They're the
4 highest.

5 I'm like well, I know they're a little higher.
6 Anyway, that was -- it wasn't the only reason but the
7 contributing factor of them not purchasing the property.
8 He called me three days later and told me they were out
9 and that was a part of it. So that's what got my
10 attention.

11 I went to the Branson meeting last night and
12 really got my eyes opened. I had no idea Liberty was
13 owned by a Canadian company at all. And that it's as
14 big a company as it was. I'm like wow. That didn't sit
15 with me. I know our prices are already a little higher
16 there. Liberty has always been higher, but they've
17 always had great service. Other than their billing
18 catastrophe, they've always been on the spot. If I've
19 had problems, I've always had good service. I can't
20 complain about that other than their messed up billing
21 stuff and obviously their management has issues.

22 I said okay. The house I'm living in now was
23 with White River. If this proposal to go through,
24 Liberty would be almost double of what they're charging.
25 And they kind of do have a monopoly, you know. They say

1 you can change providers if you want. It's not like I
2 don't like this grocery store, I'm going to go down the
3 street. I don't like this gas station, I'll go down the
4 street. You can't just change providers.

5 We know management is overpaid, messed up
6 billing. Can you trust the numbers they're giving the
7 Commission on the rest of the stuff? That will be
8 highly questionable. But the monopoly part is kind of
9 -- You know, if they was an oil petroleum company and
10 they said well, you know, we've had some screw-ups,
11 we're going to raise our prices, we're going to be
12 double what the competitors are, so instead of three
13 bucks a gallon we'll charge six bucks a gallon. Well,
14 then you wouldn't go to that station. You'd go down the
15 block or around the street or three miles down the road
16 to buy normal price. We don't have that option with the
17 electric company. It's not that simple.

18 I'm afraid they're just -- the whole thing
19 seems so unfair and unethical. People that use more
20 electric, they want to charge them a lower rate. And
21 the people who use less they want to charge a higher
22 rate. That just sounds like part of the rich get
23 richer, poor get poorer thing. That just doesn't sound
24 fair. How this can be considered is beyond me.

25 I kind of think in the back of my mind they're

1 asking so much because it's easier to come down than
2 ask. You're selling a used car or whatever, you're not
3 going to ask a low price and try to get more. Feel like
4 they're asking such a phenomenal bump that when we
5 settle for 20 or 24 percent, they'll make the public
6 feel like oh, the public did okay, we won because they
7 only got 24 percent. I think they've got to do
8 business. They're doing business right, you know, and
9 need the money, you know, 2 percent or something to get
10 them by, you know. Everything is going higher. Do the
11 job right. Give them 2 percent and see how they handle
12 it. They've mismanaged so much and it's part of our
13 infrastructure that's pretty vital. If they can't run
14 it properly at a competitive price, I'm sure somebody
15 would buy them that could do it. I mean, the government
16 bailed out General Motors when they were upside-down.
17 I'm sure the government would take over for them if they
18 couldn't handle this because that's a vital part of our
19 infrastructure. Use some common sense and don't let
20 this happen. Appreciate you. Thank you.

21 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Carner. I
22 appreciate you being here this afternoon. As stated,
23 that ends our sign-up sheet witnesses. If anyone has
24 not testified yet that would like to come up and give
25 their comments. If not, I will be ending this hearing

1 in just a minute or so.

2 We allow written comments on the website. I
3 hesitate to let you come back up only because I would
4 kind of have to let everybody come back up to talk
5 again. I apologize. Let me give the announcement on
6 how to make written comments. On our website, which is
7 psc.mo.gov, in the upper right-hand corner is a link
8 that says submit comments. And this case number is
9 ER-2024-0261. Thank you. And I understand it's the end
10 of the hearing. It seems like it would be very easy.
11 We've tried to be really fair to everyone and we had to
12 limit comments for time to make sure that everyone got
13 to speak. I sincerely apologize, but please leave a
14 comment on the website.

15 Any other witnesses? Okay. Hearing none.
16 We'll go ahead and conclude our hearing. Are there any
17 closing remarks from our Commissioners?

18 CHAIR HAHN: On behalf of the entire
19 Commission, I just want to thank you for spending your
20 afternoon with us. We know many of you have been here
21 since probably before noon and we're approaching three
22 o'clock. We know that your time is very valuable. But
23 the information that you've given us is also very
24 valuable. So know that we are listening to you and that
25 we hear you and that we're going to take that into

1 consideration before we make any decision. Thank you.

2 JUDGE HATCHER: Yes, thank you all. I will
3 repeat the submit comments instructions just for anyone
4 else. It's psc.mo.gov, that's the website. In the
5 upper right-hand corner is a link that says submit
6 comments. Make sure to include this case number, and
7 that's ER-2024-0261. With that, we'll go ahead and
8 adjourn this hearing and go off the record. Thank you
9 all. I appreciate you being here today.

10 (WHEREUPON, the proceedings concluded at 2:45
11 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

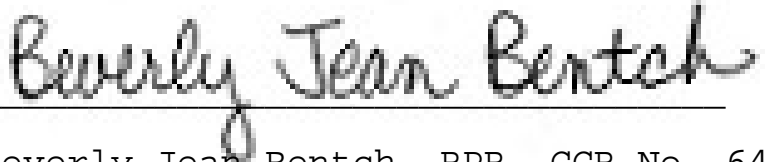
STATE OF MISSOURI)

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 51, 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 6th day of August, 2025.



Beverly Jean Bentch, RPR, CCR No. 640

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