

Testimony of Nancy Copenhaver  
AmerenUE Rate Case  
Public Hearing  
January 12, 2007

I live in Moberly, am a retired business teacher, formerly served in the Missouri House of Representatives during 2001-2002, currently working as a deputy County Clerk in Randolph County. While a representative, I served as vice-chair of the Utilities Committee. I am currently on the board of the Consumers' Council of Missouri, an intervener in this rate case. I am testifying as both a member of the Council and as a customer. I will also be leaving a handout to be made part of the record.

Safe and reliable electric service should be provided by a regulated utility. Absent that, a company should not be rewarded with higher rates. Certainly AmerenUE should not receive any rate increase for making the improvements they need to make--until they make them, and then only after there has been a full rate case audit of its total investments and expenses. It is my understanding that there are two extensive audits of AmerenUE showing that our electric rates actually should be reduced to prevent excess profits. Reports of your own staff and the Missouri Attorney General have both come to the conclusion that AmerenUE is actually over earning above and beyond the legally allowed revenue limit.

As a customer, I have suffered an extended service outage caused by an ice storm in late January, early February of 2002. My home was without power for several days in very cold temperatures. I understand that there are "safety net" programs existing in some areas and the Consumers Council advocates that AmerenUE adopt a similar program (it is attached to this testimony). The program works in this way:

Residential customers who lose their electric service for longer than 48 hours are entitled to receive compensation for the inconvenience caused by the outage. For each 24 hours after the 48-hour threshold, customers will automatically receive either a check or credit on their electric bill in the amount of \$25 for each additional 24 hours they are without electricity. Since this may only cover part of a customer's losses, it in no way prevents them from filing additional claims for losses. These claims are handled on a case-by-case basis. The safety net program is triggered whenever a storm causes both extensive and extended outages.

I am also very concerned about any possible rate increases. Our area is one in which many customers have difficulty paying their utility bills now. I am also concerned about increased utility costs for our beleaguered public school budgets; some districts in our area are currently in a very precarious financial situation due to the new school foundation formula and declining student populations. Our county is still operating at a deficit and the municipalities in our area also struggle to provide services. AmerenUE keeps repeating that it has not had a rate increase in a long while, but the reason for that is they have been consistently overearning and reaping excess profits. Ratepayers deserve a rate reduction to avoid future excess profits. Regulators should reject the rate increase and adopt its staff's recommendation for a significant decrease in rates.