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(Starting time of the hearing: 9:30 a.m.)

JUDGE FEWELL: So, we can go on record.
Good morning, everyone. If you have your cell
phones on you, please silence those. This is
an on-the-record presentation concerning the
stipulation and agreement in a commission case:
In the Matter of Spire Missouri, Incorporated,
doing business as Spire, request for authority
to implement a general rate increase for
natural gas service provided in the company's
Missouri Service Areas. That is case number
GR-2025-0107.

My name is Riley Fewell, and I'm the
regulatory law judge presiding over this
on-the-record presentation. And this is
August 27th, 2025, in room 310 of the GOB in
Jefferson City, Missouri. The current time is
9:31 a.m. Will counsel for the parties enter
their appearances for the record beginning with
Spire.

MR. ARIAS: Yes, good morning, your Honor,
commissioners. Antonio Arias on behalf of
Spire Missouri, Inc. Business adress is 700
Market Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63101.

1 Sitting next to me is Scott Weitzel, vice
2 President, external affairs.

3 JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you, Counsel.

4 MR. DANDAMUNDI: Your Honor, Sreenu
5 Dandamudi with Spire.

6 JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you, Counsel. And
7 the Staff for the Commission?

8 MR. STACEY: Scott Stacey with Staff. And
9 with me, I have Michael Abbott and Curtis
10 Gateley and several other members of the staff
11 in case they have any questions.

12 JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you. For the Public
13 Counsel?

14 MR. CLIZER: John Clizer on behalf of the
15 Office of the Public Counsel. My contact
16 information is in the record. I will introduce
17 witnesses as necessary.

18 JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you. And any
19 intervenors, beginning with Consumers' Council.

20 MR. COFFMAN: Yes, good morning. John B.
21 Coffman appearing on behalf of the Consumers'
22 Council of Missouri.

23 JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you. And for the
24 Midwest Energy Consumers Group?

25 MR. OPITZ: Good morning, Tim Opitz for

1 MECG.

2 JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you. Missouri
3 Industrial Energy Consumers Group.

4 MS. PLESCIA: Good morning. This is Diana
5 Plescia on behalf of the Missouri Industrial
6 Energy Consumers.

7 JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you. And for the
8 Missouri School Boards Association?

9 MR. JARRETT: Yes, good morning. Terry
10 Jarrett with Healy Law Offices on behalf of the
11 Missouri School Board Association.

12 JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you. I'd like to
13 begin with some opening statements from
14 counsel. Treat these openings regarding the
15 stipulation and agreement, but understand that
16 the Commission may have questions at any time
17 for the attorneys or witnesses. If there is a
18 question for a witness then I will swear that
19 witness in. The stipulation and agreement is
20 not confidential but if any confidential
21 information is introduced, I'm relying on the
22 parties to inform me so that we can go off
23 camera. Is there anything else from counsel or
24 the bench before we began with opening
25 statements from Spire? Okay. Spire, if you

1 can -- begin.

2 OPENING STATEMENT BY MR. ARIAS:

3 MR. ARIAS: Yes, your Honor, thank you.

4 Just very briefly, Spire is very pleased to
5 appear before the Commission today to answer
6 questions about the full and unanimous
7 stipulation and agreement that was reached in
8 our general rate case. We believe this
9 agreement sets fair and reasonable rates based
10 on our cost of service, and this is the product
11 of nearly eight months of discovery, multiple
12 rounds of testimony, local public hearings and
13 negotiations among all the parties at various
14 settlement conferences.

15 We appreciate all the efforts the parties
16 may have had, during and after the three-day
17 settlement in July to reach this stipulation
18 agreement. We believe everyone -- again, just
19 made significant efforts to get the stipulation
20 agreed on and filed.

21 JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you.

22 MR. ARIAS: And we are -- we are available
23 to answer any questions the Commission might
24 have.

25 JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you. Any other

1 opening statements from Staff or any of the
2 other parties?

3 MR. STACEY: None from Staff, Judge.

4 JUDGE FEWELL: Okay. If we want to begin
5 with Commission questions. Chair Hahn?

6 QUESTIONS BY THE COMMISSION:

7 CHAIR HAHN: Thank you, Judge. Appreciate
8 the parties coming in today on-the-record. My
9 questions are fairly brief. And one is
10 actually a comment.

11 So, I'll start with the question and then
12 go to the comment. There is a disparity
13 between east and west. I was hoping someone
14 could help explain that as to the purpose of
15 the rate impact difference in those
16 territories.

17 MR. CLIZER: You want to --

18 MR. WEITZEL: Give me -- yes.

19 MR. CLIZER: Yeah, go ahead.

20 MR. WEITZEL: Good morning, Chair, this is
21 Scott Weitzel, Spire. You might be referencing
22 or looking at maybe the volumetric rates that
23 they could be ten or 12 cents higher east
24 versus west. A layer on top of this is the
25 total bill impact of the customer. So, for

1 east, the increase will be about 10 percent or
2 about \$8.21 a month. For a west, it's about
3 ten and a half percent or \$8.93, so it's only
4 \$0.70 more on the west. And a main reason for
5 that is the billing determinates.

6 Usage is more on the east; that's less on
7 the west. So, even though the volumetric rates
8 might look a little higher the total bill
9 impact is pretty comparable when you talk east
10 for west, and that's only about \$0.70 a month
11 difference.

12 Another item on the top of that is that
13 we've owned MGE for about ten or 15 years now.
14 The previous owner did have some other
15 investment on that side of the state, so we've
16 been playing a little bit of catch up, and
17 that's why they're just a hair bit higher than
18 the east side of the state.

19 CHAIR HAHN: Okay, thank you.

20 MR. CLIZER: If I could, I'd add to that
21 just as a brief point, you know, whenever we're
22 doing one of these rate cases, we always try to
23 prescribe to the principal of cost causation.
24 We are trying to make sure that the costs stick
25 to those who are actually causing the cost to

1 be occurred.

2 In the particular case when you have Spire
3 East and West as two service areas, they're
4 slightly different amounts in terms of
5 the capital expenditures that have been made,
6 as well as slight differences in the way
7 they're managed which results in different
8 costs. Just being created from each of the two
9 sides. So, we keep them separate in order to
10 honor that concept of cost causation and try
11 and keep each side paying for just those costs
12 related to serving them to the degree possible.

13 JUDGE FEWELL: Mr. Weitzel, I should
14 probably swear you in, in case any other
15 questions are asked especially.

16 (Scott Weitzel sworn.)

17 COMMISSIONER KOLKMEYER: Quick comment.

18 JUDGE FEWELL: Yes.

19 COMMISSIONER KOLKMEYER: Thank you,
20 Mr. Clizer. That answered my question. At
21 least one of them, so thank you.

22 CHAIR HAHN: The only other thing that I
23 was going to mention today is, when I was
24 reading the stipulation and agreement, it's
25 fairly hard to track low income programs,

1 what's available, what's offered, how much is
2 in each program. I know that the Commission is
3 going to undertake, alongside OPC, a workshop
4 to better understand low income programs. I
5 might suggest, not particularly for this that
6 stipulation agreement, but I think it would be
7 really helpful to have a list of your program
8 offers, their budgets, the administrative costs
9 to run those, and annual expenditures, also how
10 they're funded.

11 So, if there's a shareholder-customer
12 split, if you would just put that information
13 together in anticipation of upcoming workshops,
14 that would be really helpful. That's all I
15 have. Thank you, Judge.

16 JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you, Chair. And
17 Commissioner Coleman, do you have any questions
18 for the parties?

19 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: I do, thank you.
20 Thank you, Judge. Let me piggyback a little on
21 the question that Chair Hahn just had about low
22 income.

23 Point 21 in the stipulation says there's a
24 \$6 million cap on low income assistance. Can
25 someone tell me how this compares with previous

1 amounts?

2 MR. CLIZER: So, I'll go ahead and take
3 that first one, and I might turn this over to
4 my witness here Dr. Geoff Marke, in which case
5 he'll need to be sworn. But at a high level,
6 what you're referring to is actually a very
7 specific program. I do not believe that that's
8 a cap for the entire low income program or
9 other energy assistance programs that might be
10 offered for -- got to be a little careful here.
11 Not every energy assistance is specifically a
12 program for just low income. There's also
13 medical needs, for example, that can affect
14 people that may or may not be in that kind of
15 bracket. So, that 6 million is specific for
16 just that offering, which is a new one being --

17 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Is that --

18 MR. CLIZER: -- put forth for this case.

19 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Is that the
20 Critical Needs Program?

21 MR. CLIZER: No, that is a program that is
22 designed to provide for individuals based on
23 their income level. That is a specific new one
24 over here. And before I get out over my skis,
25 I might just turn this over to Dr. Marke to

1 make sure that I'm not needed to be corrected.

2 So, if you would swear him.

3 (Dr. Geoff Marke sworn.)

4 JUDGE FEWELL: You may proceed.

5 DR. MARKE: Hi, Commissioner Coleman.

6 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Good morning.

7 DR. MARKE: So, the program is really a
8 low income rate. So, item number 21, is a --
9 it's a bill reduction for qualified customers.
10 So, effectively, they're waiving the customer
11 charge. So, it's a \$22 break effectively for
12 eligible customers. We don't have anything
13 like this in place for any utilities, so this
14 is really a response to SB4, and it's funded
15 both 50/50 between ratepayers and shareholders.
16 So, it's unique. We're hoping -- we're
17 cautiously optimistic that this might be, at
18 least directionally, in the right way of
19 setting rates for low income customers moving
20 forward.

21 The \$6 million is a cap right now. If --
22 there's a number of reasons to -- to expect
23 some variety in terms of the actual
24 participation levels of this program. If the
25 numbers exceed that, my understanding is that

1 customer -- that parties will have a good sense
2 of whether or not that number is being reached
3 well ahead of time. And, if need be, you know,
4 no doubt there will be future negotiations and
5 discussions as what to would happen if -- if
6 that level is about to be breached.

7 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Okay, thank you.

8 MR. CLIZER: Do you want to discuss the
9 Critical Needs Program?

10 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Yeah, the Critical
11 Needs Program and the Keeping Warm Program, how
12 do they compare?

13 DR. MARKE: So, the best way to think of
14 it is think of three different buckets. We've
15 got a bucket for affordability, and that's this
16 bucket right here, number 21. This is the low
17 income assistance program. This is a bill
18 discount. It's straightforward. We're
19 providing a more affordable bill for certain
20 customers. The second bucket is for what I
21 characterize as sustainability. And those are
22 customers that have arrearages. Those are
23 customers that are falling behind on their
24 bills. The Keeping Warm program in part helps
25 with that.

1 It's also designed effectively to target
2 customers to -- as designed to keep their
3 furnace on during the cold months. So, it is
4 really more of a sustainability program that
5 also deals with arrearages.

6 The third program or the third bucket is
7 what I would characterize as crisis. And
8 that's the Critical Medical Needs, in some
9 cases it's rehousing. The Critical Medical
10 Needs program is really just immediate bill
11 credits, and really more just than, it's the
12 ability to delay disconnection for a time
13 period until funds can be redirected to help
14 those -- that household.

15 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: All right, thanks.
16 I want someone to discuss with me Point 16 in
17 the stipulation. That in the case -- rate case
18 expense will be recovered over a two-year
19 period. Will ratepayers be paying the
20 company -- the company's expense or will the
21 company share those expenses, and do we have an
22 estimate of how much those expenses will be?

23 MR. CLIZER: So, I'll take a first stab
24 and somebody else is free to jump in after
25 that. Rate case expense is a component that

1 gets put into every single rate case that we
2 have here more or less. And, in general, it's
3 part of the revenue requirement in this case.

4 What's actually being spelled out here,
5 which is the only reason it's being spelled out
6 individually, is the time period over which
7 that rate case is being -- I'm going to get
8 this wrong, is it being amortized or normalized
9 in this case? Normalized. And accountants
10 will tell you what the difference is, I don't
11 know. So, normally, we've usually used a
12 three-year-old period to normalize rate case
13 expense, and that's because that's what the
14 company, Spire in particular, has historically
15 been operating on due to the check legislation.
16 Then we are moving to a two year for reasons
17 that I'm going to leave Spire kind of to
18 explain the justification for moving to that
19 two year. But that's just the time period over
20 which that account will be drawn down on the
21 company's books for accounting purposes. The
22 actual dollar amount is already baked into the
23 revenue requirement that is in this. So,
24 there's no additional dollars because it's all
25 part of the black box. Does that make sense?

1 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Don't mention
2 black box around me.

3 MR. CLIZER: Fair enough.

4 MR. WEITZEL: Good morning, Commissioner,
5 this is Scott Weitzel at Spire. You know, we
6 negotiated this, but I think if you want to
7 kind of understand where all that landed, you
8 could kind of look back at past cases. That
9 was -- that was kind of a guide for us on the
10 Sharing program. But, you know, we didn't
11 identify that, but I think you could anchor
12 back to staff's testimony in previous cases,
13 and that will give you a good guide on how this
14 was handled.

15 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Okay, so you're
16 telling me to go do the work, huh?

17 MR. WEITZEL: I -- again, Commissioner,
18 these are a little dicey sometimes when we're
19 talking about stipulations, but I'm just trying
20 to give you a guide and I can talk to your
21 advisors as well.

22 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Okay, thank you.

23 MR. WEITZEL: Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Okay. So, I've
25 got a question about Appendix 1. In Appendix

1 1, why do the cast iron mains in Spire East
2 have a depreciation of 19.5 percent, while cast
3 iron mains in Spire West have a depreciation
4 rate of 11.17 percent?

5 MR. CLIZER: Told my depreciation expert
6 he probably didn't need to come down. I was
7 wrong.

8 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Well, maybe
9 someone can get that answer while I ask some
10 others, okay?

11 MR. CLIZER: Yeah, give us just a second
12 on that, sorry.

13 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Okay. No problem.
14 It just goes to show how brilliant you are,
15 Mr. Clizer.

16 MR. WEITZEL: I don't know if Shelly
17 Antrainer is on for Spire, and maybe could give
18 a little color on that.

19 MS. ANTRAINER: Yes, Shelly Antrainer from
20 Spire.

21 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Shelly, did you
22 hear the question?

23 MS. ANTRAINER: Yes, I did. Can I go
24 ahead and answer it without being sworn in?

25 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: That's up to the

1 Judge.

2 JUDGE FEWELL: I'd like to swear you in
3 first, if I can, so you can give your answers.

4 (Shelly Antrainer sworn.)

5 JUDGE FEWELL: Okay. You may proceed.

6 MS. ANTRAINER: Those rates are different
7 because of where we are in our program on each
8 side of the state. I believe it was discussed
9 earlier that the Infrastructure Replacement
10 Program, we are further ahead on the east side
11 of the state, and we -- based off of the
12 balances that we have left in those accounts,
13 our depreciation expert determined that the
14 rate should be higher on the east side of the
15 state to recover on the costs. On the west
16 side we have more time, because there's not a
17 cast iron definite replacement timeframe that
18 we're looking at. So, there's a lower rate on
19 that for cost recovery.

20 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Okay, okay. I
21 think that answers that. Thank you,
22 Ms. Antrainer. Appreciate it. All right, I
23 have some questions regarding weather -- the
24 Weather Normalization Rider. Can anyone
25 explain why the Weather Normalization Rider

1 doesn't shift risk from the investors to the
2 ratepayers?

3 MR. WEITZEL: Good morning, Commissioner
4 Coleman, this is Scott Weitzel at Spire. The
5 WNAR tool is -- is helpful in us having the
6 opportunity to potentially earn our revenue
7 requirement set in these rate proceedings.
8 However, it's not a perfect tool. Last year,
9 we were still in a deficit of around
10 \$7 million. This year, it's trending the same,
11 and kind of because we're not even able to hit
12 our revenue requirement number, S&P downgraded
13 us last year. So, it's a useful tool, but
14 there is still very much risk on the company
15 and shareholders, because it's -- it's not
16 truing us up to a revenue requirement number,
17 and we're not, in the past year or two, we're
18 not able to hit that even having that nice
19 tool. Another component of that is, is most
20 jurisdictions have these type of riders,
21 whether they're volume balancing adjustments,
22 whether they're weather riders, and we see
23 national ROEs, those, you know, half if not
24 more of those jurisdictions have those types of
25 tools in there, and there's how those ROEs are

1 calculated.

2 MR. CLIZER: So, this is where things get
3 kind of difficult, because the pointed fact is
4 the OPC disagrees with Spire on a lot of this.
5 And to answer your question from the OPC's
6 perspective, yes, we do believe the WNAR shifts
7 risks from the company onto ratepayers.

8 We filed testimony in this case that
9 ultimately we're going to request the
10 commissioner reject the WNAR. Now, obviously,
11 we've made a tactical decision based on our
12 consideration of the likelihood on all the
13 merits in the case, the risk exposed to taking
14 this to hearing, and our overall general
15 resources available to us, and agreed to a
16 settlement that allows the WNAR to continue.

17 But the short version is that, you know,
18 we do believe that is, in fact, the case. And
19 I do just want to throw out, again, I'm not
20 here to necessarily get into a debate with
21 Mr. Weitzel, but in our opinion, the impact on
22 the ROE from having a WNAR is negligible
23 compared to other factors. There may be some
24 impact, but we don't believe it's nearly as
25 egregious as what the company maintains it is.

1 But that's the thing: both parties are going to
2 have a difference of opinion, and both parties
3 are going to have their, you know, their
4 prerogatives to state their opinion.

5 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: So, Mr. Clizer, I
6 know Lena Mantle, when she was on the witness
7 stand, talked about the WNAR. So, are you
8 feeling that, based on what you just said that,
9 the majority -- that there were a lot of things
10 given up based on what we heard Ms. Mantle say,
11 and what you all agreed to in the stipulation?

12 MR. CLIZER: I want to answer that, but I
13 want to make sure I understand when you say a
14 lot of things given up. Can you help --

15 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Well --

16 MR. CLIZER: -- what exactly you asked.

17 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: When you talk
18 about -- well, I guess my question is, was the
19 corresponding adjustment to the rates made in
20 the stipulations? That's some of the testimony
21 that Lena Mantle talked about. Does that make
22 sense?

23 MR. CLIZER: If you would, as Ms. Mantle
24 has joined behind me, I would be happy to turn
25 it over to her and let her try and answer that

1 directly. Judge, if you want to swear her?

2 JUDGE FEWELL: Sure.

3 (Lena Mantle sworn.)

4 JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you. You may
5 proceed.

6 MS. MANTLE: Good morning, Commissioner
7 Coleman.

8 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Good morning.

9 MS. MANTLE: As Mr. Clizer has previously
10 said, we have -- when we do go into settlement
11 discussions, we have to weigh the various
12 aspects of the different positions and since
13 Spire, currently had a WNAR and looking at
14 other inputs into the revenue requirement, it
15 was our position that it was -- it was balanced
16 out by other gives to the customers through the
17 revenue requirement.

18 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Okay.

19 MS. MANTLE: Did that answer your
20 question --

21 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Yeah, you said it
22 was balanced out by other gives, so that
23 answers the question. And let's see who might
24 be able to talk about this with me. During the
25 hearings often customers talked about the

1 attempts they've made to make their homes more
2 energy efficiency using better equipment, newer
3 equipment, an attempt for less gas usage. So,
4 explain how the Weather Normalization Rider
5 doesn't penalize ratepayers who are doing
6 everything they can to lower their gas bills.

7 MS. MANTLE: It does penalize them. I
8 mean, that's one of the problems that we have
9 with the WNAR, is a customer can go to great
10 lengths to reduce their usage and then -- but
11 their neighbors not, and their neighbors
12 change, and their bills after that do not just
13 reflect their own patterns of usage but also
14 the changes any their customers -- their -- the
15 other customers may or may have not made. So,
16 yes, it does penalize that.

17 There's an equation in the tariff sheets,
18 and my attorneys would tell me that not
19 everybody understands those, but the change,
20 you know, it is not a one to one. There's --
21 so, the change is slight, and we just kind of
22 balance that knowing that those other customers
23 do influence the customer whose changed their
24 usage patterns. And, again, it's a balance.
25 Even without the WNAR, other customers

1 influence rates. It's the diversity among
2 those customers that really is important in
3 setting rates, and that bias is always there,
4 but has increased some with a WNAR.

5 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Okay.

6 MR. WEITZEL: Good morning, Commissioner.
7 Scott Weitzel, Spire.

8 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Good morning.

9 MR. WEITZEL: You know, another way that I
10 sometimes look at it, that, you know, might be
11 different than the Office of Public Counsel is
12 that the WNAR does not account for
13 conservation. We have continued to see lower
14 usage per customers, and even with the WNAR
15 rate, let's say it's 5 cents. If you put -- we
16 don't change the WNAR rate for -- it's only an
17 annual filing. So, if you make energy
18 efficiency improvements to your home, and
19 you're using 700 CCF, and, now, you're using
20 680 CCF your bill will go down. That -- when
21 you're using us, you're paying less for the
22 volumetric rate; you're paying less for the PGA
23 less; and you're paying less for the WNAR rate.
24 So, I think you would be able to see that
25 if you made those improvements in your home.

1 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: How long would it
2 take a person to start seeing that sort of
3 improvement, though?

4 MR. WEITZEL: I would say as soon those
5 appliances, weatherization, are up and running
6 in part of that family's home.

7 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Okay. So,
8 that's -- Dr. Marke, let's get your comment in,
9 and then I have another one for Mr. Weitzel.

10 DR. MARKE: Okay, thank you, Commissioner.
11 The pay back is longer, is the short answer.
12 So, all things being equal, if you didn't have
13 a WNAR, and you made investments in your home,
14 it would pay for itself in a much shorter
15 timeframe than if you had the WNAR.

16 So, another way of looking at this, that
17 this is sort of a close cousin to a MIA
18 surcharge. So, as where the MIA just looks at
19 the energy efficiency investment, the WNAR is
20 looking at the weather side of things. But
21 they're accomplishing affectively the same
22 thing, just in different manners. I don't know
23 if that helps --

24 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Okay.

25 DR. MARKE: Or makes things more

1 complicated, but yeah.

2 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Yeah, it does
3 both, but thank you.

4 DR. MARKE: Okay.

5 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: So, now, I have a
6 general question for Spire. I'm a Spire
7 customer on the east side of the state, and I
8 want to talk about what went on in July of 2022
9 when Spire put out a press release that warned
10 of the potential mass gas service outage
11 during the winter. This was relative to the
12 pipeline situation that was going on. You had
13 dire warnings that you sent out in an e-mail.
14 The company was investigated by the Commission
15 at that time for what we felt were
16 exaggerations and frightening customers.

17 Because I am a Spire East customer, of
18 course, not only was I affected by these
19 comments, but I received a variety of phone
20 calls from customers concerned. The news even
21 reported that stores in the St. Louis
22 Metropolitan Area had sold out of electric
23 heaters because of the -- the -- the attempt by
24 Spire to really paint a dire, dire picture. So
25 I want to know what have you done, the company

1 done since that time to try to rebuild the
2 trust and confidence that customers need.

3 MR. WEITZEL: Good morning, Commissioner.
4 Scott Weitzel with Spire. Just since, you
5 know, you brought up the past, I'll do a little
6 history on it and then kind of address what
7 we've done going forward. Spire Missouri, the
8 utility operator in the state, you know, we
9 made plans to diversify pipelines to the St.
10 Louis area.

11 During this time, we got caught in the
12 middle. We got caught in the middle of the
13 FERC -- the Energy -- Federal Energy Regulatory
14 Commission, and a lawsuit by an environmental
15 group; and as those two were fighting it out,
16 we were stuck in the middle. And as they were
17 fighting it out, the FERC decided that, hey,
18 we're going to stop operating this pipeline on
19 this specific date. And that's -- that's real.
20 In the middle of winter, us losing, you know,
21 half of our supply, that -- that -- that had us
22 very, very concerned. We were contingency
23 planning. We were looking at other options to
24 serve the St. Louis area, because the
25 regulators of the interstate pipeline were

1 shutting that down.

2 We did send a couple communications to our
3 customers. The Staff investigated those
4 comments, and then we sent out a third
5 communication at the recommendation of Staff
6 working with them. And, so, there's some
7 communication there. There was a concern.
8 Luckily, the FERC saw that this was critical
9 and vital diversity supply to the St. Louis
10 area. So, I'm glad that's behind us. Because
11 we're losing half of our supply in the
12 wintertime, as the gas operator, you know, our
13 core function is safety and reliability. So,
14 you know, glad that's behind us. And great
15 question on how we're building that trust. And
16 I think it's how we're showing up in the
17 community. I think it's how we're trying to
18 constantly improve our customer service. We're
19 not perfect, and I appreciate the parties in
20 this room keeping us honest and keeping us
21 fresh, where we're constantly trying to improve
22 that process.

23 And, so, I think -- I think that showed up
24 a little bit in our local public hearings.
25 Yes, there's people that are upset about

1 increases. I understand that, but there were
2 people that were critical of the increases, but
3 were also positive about what we're doing in
4 the community, their interactions with Spire,
5 and so we're trying our best, Commissioner, to
6 rebuild anything there. You know, we're seeing
7 some bits. It's getting warmer, but we're
8 seeing these critical cold days pop up. And,
9 you know, gas is the most reliable fuel source
10 out there, and even when we have these
11 extremely cold days, people could be confident
12 and comfortable turning on their heat, turning
13 on their fireplace or cooking, and that's our
14 core value.

15 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Mr. Weitzel, you
16 did really a good job of towing the company PR
17 line, I think, in that answer you just gave me,
18 so you're doing a good job that you're supposed
19 to do as a Spire employee. But I don't want
20 you to downplay how serious and how traumatic
21 this situation was to customers in the St.
22 Louis Metropolitan Area. There was actual
23 fright. There was a lot of media coverage, and
24 so I'm happy to see that the company
25 understands the seriousness of this, and has

1 taken some steps, but I don't want Spire to
2 forget that as far as for many people are
3 concerned, Spire initiated the campaign to --
4 to scare people into reaching out to FERC and
5 everybody else that they could about this issue
6 to get support to make sure that pipeline
7 didn't shut down. And I'm not sure and never
8 felt sure, that there was ever any real threat
9 of the pipeline being shut down. So, there's
10 definitely been quite a feeling that the
11 company overreacted in this. And my goal is
12 that hopefully you see that that wasn't the
13 correct way to go about this. So, I appreciate
14 your answer. I appreciate the fact that you
15 gave the answer that -- that's appropriate.
16 But I just want everybody to do better, okay?

17 MR. WEITZEL: Commissioner, absolutely.
18 There are definitely lessons learned from
19 that -- that process and that past. Engaging
20 OPC Staff, the Commission, before something of
21 to that magnitude happens is something that
22 we're going to improve on. And there has been
23 lessons learned that we have in Spire,
24 Commissioner, so we will definitely do better.

25 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Okay, thank you,

1 Judge. That's all the questions I have.

2 JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you, Commissioner
3 Coleman. Commission Kolkmeyer, do you have any
4 questions or comments?

5 QUESTIONS BY COMMISSIONER KOLKMEYER:

6 COMMISSIONER KOLKMEYER: Yes, thank you,
7 Judge. First of all, I want to give a shout
8 out or a thank you to Commissioner Coleman for
9 her questions that she asked. They were very
10 good and very deep. I have some of those same
11 concerns. I also want to thank all the parties
12 that came together. With all of the cases that
13 are stacked on top of one another, no, we don't
14 like -- as commissioners, we don't like black
15 box settlements. However, with all of the
16 multiple cases stacked on top of one another,
17 it's stretches our staff. It stretches OPC.
18 So, that definitely helps out.

19 I want to thank Mr. Clizer, again for the
20 east and the west. Commissioner Coleman is an
21 east customer. My family business is a west
22 customer of Spire. So, yes, this affects me
23 and my family. I second Chair Hahn's request
24 for the low income program with Spire, and help
25 us, help OPC and our staff come together.

1 I have -- when people find out I'm a
2 commissioner, I have two things that people
3 comment about. One is don't raise my rates,
4 okay, that's on all utilities. So, that's not
5 picking on any one. But the second line item,
6 the second thing that pops up is, what are all
7 of these charges on my bill? That's -- I mean,
8 people have no idea what they're paying. Line
9 item after line item after line item, and this
10 is going -- I'm not picking on Spire here. I'm
11 saying we, as an industry and regulatory body,
12 need to come up with somehow, some way that we
13 can communicate to the customers what their
14 paying for because they don't have a clue. I
15 mean, all these acronyms and everything else,
16 we, as Commissioners, have a hard time, hard
17 enough time, dealing with acronyms let alone
18 the public and understand what they're all for.

19 Paying for stuff that's bygone. Winter
20 storms that are how many years old that we're
21 still paying for and/or paying for equipment
22 that's not even in service yet. The public
23 they just don't understand. But this is the
24 framework, and the rules that the legislator
25 has given us, so it's the rules we're playing

1 under.

2 I have some concern over the percentage,
3 so there's been a 43.13 percent increase since
4 the -- Spire's 2017 case. That concerns me a
5 little bit. But I know inflation is here. I
6 know we're dealing with it, and what have you,
7 although I think that's -- that's up there.
8 Just -- that. I don't know I have any
9 questions. Commissioner Coleman, she pretty
10 well asked the questions that I was thinking
11 on, so all I had was comments so thank you,
12 Judge.

13 JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you, Commissioner
14 Kolkmeier. And Commissioner Mitchell, do you
15 have questions or comments?

16 QUESTIONS BY COMMISSIONER MITCHELL:

17 COMMISSIONER MITCHELL: Thank you, Judge.
18 I just wanted to thank the parties as well for
19 their hard work on this, and I appreciate
20 Commissioner Kolkmeier's comment about the
21 volume and case load, and that is -- that is a
22 fact that we live in. That's the world we live
23 in today, but I wanted to make clear that Staff
24 and OPC and the parties are still doing their
25 jobs. Even though, the staff is stressed and

1 strained at times. I think they're still doing
2 an excellent job at what they do every day, so
3 I want to thank you for that and commend you
4 for doing that in this -- in this time, where
5 there is just a lot of catch up and really a
6 change in tempo in how we deal -- how we deal
7 with the case.

8 I'm also worried about the disparity
9 between east and west. I think the question
10 was asked and, I think mostly answered, but I
11 think maybe, in my mind, a big part of the
12 differential is, you know, also to two
13 differences in investment in those two -- in
14 those two districts; and if I'm wrong about
15 that, I'd like to be corrected or like to have
16 a better understanding.

17 MR. CLIZER: No, again, your understanding
18 is correct. It's investment, and it's also a
19 minor bit about the operations and maintenance
20 costs. There are minor different ways in how
21 the two companies -- the two halves are
22 operated. Those are historical legacy items,
23 and I can provide more detail if you want. I
24 won't necessarily give it to you. But, yeah.
25 Again, I just want to make sure this is clear:

1 anytime you start violating that principle of
2 cost causation, you are implicitly engaging in
3 some kind of subsidization.

4 You know, if you have two different
5 systems and they're being charged different
6 amounts for the different level of service, and
7 you say, well, we're going to charge a flat
8 rate to both of them, one side is now going to
9 be paying slightly more to serve the other side
10 effectively. That is the give and take between
11 that. Does that make sense?

12 COMMISSIONER MITCHELL: Understand,
13 understand. And I think to Commissioner
14 Kolkmeyer's point, the ratepayer, I think, has
15 at times, a hard time understanding the
16 breakdown of the bill; and I think we need to
17 do a better job in educating the ratepayers,
18 the folks who are writing the check every month
19 as, you know, to exactly what it is that those
20 acronyms mean, and what, you know, they're for
21 and the justification for them being there.
22 So, I really think we need to do a better job
23 of communicating. That, and, again, to
24 Commissioner Kolkmeyer's point, I think that is
25 not -- not a dig at Spire. It's more of a

1 global comment as to the way, you know, bills
2 are structured and explained across all of our
3 utilities. So, I think we need to do a better
4 job of that.

5 My only question in all this is the -- the
6 Low Income Assistance Program, and the Critical
7 Needs Program and Keep Warm programs, I think
8 you explained, Dr. Marke explained, the
9 shareholders participate in the Low Income
10 Assistance Program to fairly large degree. I
11 think he said a 50/50. My question is in other
12 programs, do the shareholders have a stake in
13 those as well?

14 DR. MARKE: I believe my direct testimony
15 has got a breakdown of all the programs and the
16 cost and the sharings with that, Spire
17 participates in the 50/50 sharing. I'm going
18 to get this right. I believe across all bill
19 assistance programs; however, the
20 weatherization right now is not 50/50. So,
21 that's the one difference. Now, we raised
22 weatherization a little bit in this case on, I
23 want to say the east side, just to make even
24 across both east and west or the equivalent
25 amount. But Spire's got, honestly, a fairly

1 robust low income bill assistance programs,
2 plural, and those are 50/50 across the board.

3 COMMISSIONER MITCHELL: Thank you.

4 MR. WEITZEL: Commissioner, we've got
5 about \$10 million in energy assistance
6 programs, and the shareholders pay 5.1 million,
7 about 50 percent of those, and you are correct;
8 weatherization is a program we have for over a
9 decade, if not decades, and that is not a
10 shareholder.

11 COMMISSIONER MITCHELL: Thank you. I have
12 no other questions, Judge.

13 JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you, Commissioner
14 Mitchell. I have a couple of questions. Just
15 a few, more than a couple.

16 QUESTIONS BY JUDGE FEWELL:

17 JUDGE FEWELL: The original request was
18 for around \$290 million. Can anyone tell me
19 the percent this agreed upon amount is? Sorry,
20 it's math, I know.

21 MR. ARIAS: Your Honor, I think it comes
22 out to just around 73 percent. It's like 72.6.

23 JUDGE FEWELL: Then some of these other
24 questions have to do with the continuing
25 property records audit. The agreement,

1 Stipulation Agreement in Case Number
2 GR-2022-0179 at paragraph 37, states that upon
3 completion, the audit report should be filed
4 with Commission in EFIS. In the rebuttal
5 testimony of Michelle Antrainer on page 2, she
6 states that Spire Missouri received and
7 submitted to the parties, the Grant Thornton CPR
8 Audit Findings on February 27 of this year.

9 Was that audit ever filed into EFIS?

10 MR. ARIAS: I don't believe so, actually,
11 now that I'm thinking about it; but we can file
12 that in the -- the last rate case docket or
13 submit it as a non-case filing. Just whatever
14 is cleaner but --

15 MR. WEITZEL: Yeah, Judge, I think we sent
16 it to the parties as part of a data request,
17 but we can get it on the record.

18 MR. CLIZER: I'm also fairly confident it
19 was attached as an exhibit to, at least one, if
20 not -- I believe at least one staff witness,
21 and potentially one OPC witness. So, the
22 Commission takes the testimony under the record
23 as what's envisioned by the parties, it will be
24 there as well.

25 JUDGE FEWELL: Okay, I'll review it --

1 MR. ARIAS: Thank you, Mr. Clizer.

2 JUDGE FEWELL: Yeah, thank you. I'll
3 review it, because I'll formalize admitting
4 those exhibits as well. Thank you. I have one
5 more -- maybe two questions. Ms. Antrainer
6 also indicated in her direct testimony that any
7 plant adjustments required as a result of the
8 Grant Thorton audit would be included in the
9 True-Up testimony, which ultimately wasn't
10 filed as the procedural schedule was suspended.

11 Were there any plant adjustments related
12 to the Grant Thorton audit, including --
13 included in the stipulated 4,379,000,000 and
14 change, total plant and service balances at May
15 31, 2025, the end of the true-up period. So,
16 were there any plant adjustments included in
17 that amount, the total plan?

18 MR. ARIAS: I will let Shelly,
19 Ms. Antrainer, correct me, but we did make
20 plant retirements as part of that audit.
21 Ms. Antrainer can you give the specific
22 equipment or materials that were retired?

23 MS. ANTRAINER: There were -- based off
24 the Grant Thorton recommendations, we did go
25 through and do a reconciliation on our

1 diaphragm meters, and there was -- there were
2 retirements related to that.

3 JUDGE FEWELL: And does that include the
4 USOA? Sorry, that's too technical for me.

5 MS. ANTRAINER: The USOA is accounting
6 standards, so it would not impact the
7 retirements. I do understand the question in
8 that text.

9 JUDGE FEWELL: I'll rephrase the question.
10 Would Spire agree to provide with its direct
11 filing in its next rate case, the
12 plant balances by the USOA account number at
13 May 31 of this year to reconcile with the
14 stipulated total plants in service for Spire
15 East and Spire West as of that date?

16 MR. CLIZER: I'm sorry, your Honor.
17 What date was that?

18 JUDGE FEWELL: May 31, '25. That's the
19 true-up date.

20 MR. ARIAS: Are you asking for the
21 retirements, for the retirements or just for --

22 JUDGE FEWELL: To reconcile with the
23 stipulated total balance, total plant and
24 service.

25 MR. ARIAS: Could you just ask repeat --

1 could you ask your question more time just for
2 us?

3 JUDGE FEWELL: Sure.

4 MR. ARIAS: Sorry.

5 JUDGE FEWELL: It's regarding the
6 plant balances by the USOA account number at
7 May 31, 2025, to reconcile with the stipulated
8 total plants in service at that date.

9 MR. ARIAS: Okay, your Honor, I believe we
10 can.

11 JUDGE FEWELL: Okay.

12 MR. ARIAS: Shelly, correct --
13 Ms. Antrainer, please correct me if I'm wrong,
14 but I believe we can.

15 MS. ANTRAINER: I believe that information
16 was supplied in response to a data request for
17 the true-up, but we can look up that number and
18 give you the specific data request response if
19 that answers the questions.

20 MR. ARIAS: Yes, we can agree to it, yeah.

21 JUDGE FEWELL: In the next rate case?

22 MR. ARIAS: Yes.

23 JUDGE FEWELL: Okay. And I just mentioned
24 that was all the questions that I had. I
25 mentioned kind of that the exhibits were asked

1 to be entered, and I will formalize that in an
2 order approving the stipulation when that gets
3 issued through the Commission. Is there
4 anything else from counsel or the bench?

5 MR. COFFMAN: Your Honor?

6 JUDGE FEWELL: Yes?

7 MR. COFFMAN: This is John Coffman for
8 Consumers Council. Just a couple comments I
9 wanted to get into the record for clarity.
10 First of all, on your question about the
11 percentage, I appreciate that. It's often very
12 hard for me to sometimes understand the
13 percentages that are going on, but I wanted to
14 make sure that if the Commission or if you are
15 referring to a percentage, that you make sure
16 you identify what it is that it is going into
17 the percentage. And there's often a mismatch
18 between the increase to the base rates, which
19 is the subject of this case, and what the
20 overall impact might be on the average
21 estimated bill of a customer. I think that
22 7 percent is looking at the overall, which
23 includes the purchased gas adjustment.

24 So, I just wanted to make sure, if you're
25 using a percentage, that you identify whether

1 it's increasing the base rate by this
2 percentage or increasing what the average bill
3 might be when taking everything into account,
4 including the PGA.

5 And the other thing I wanted to note that
6 this is confusing to look at the overall
7 picture of customer assistance programs, who
8 might be here, and one of the reasons is some
9 of the commitments are in other cases; and I
10 wanted to also note that some of the
11 commitments, including commitments from Spire
12 to fund part of these programs through
13 shareholder funds, is included in a previous
14 ACA case, which involved discussion of the STL
15 pipeline. And that's case number GR-2021-
16 0127. So, that's in conjunction with this
17 case. I think you can see the whole picture as
18 it relates to programs for Spire. And that's
19 all I had. Thank you.

20 JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you, Mr. Coffman.
21 Any other comments from counsel?

22 MR. ARIAS: Just from Spire, your Honor.
23 Thank you for your time this morning and the
24 Commissioners, thank you.

25 JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you. And from the

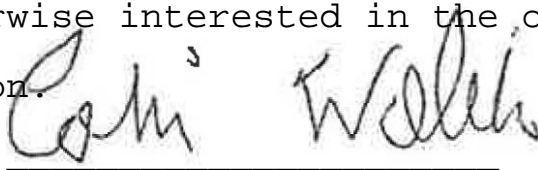
1 Commission?

2 CHAIR HAHN: Just to close us out this
3 morning, appreciate the parties coming down to
4 do an on the record. I know it's kind of that
5 extra step, but I think it does help the
6 Commission on questions. I know Commissioners
7 Kolkmeier and Mitchell mentioned it. It's
8 clear, just from sitting on this on the record,
9 that the parties all gave and worked well
10 together, so that makes the Commission's job' a
11 lot easier. Really appreciate that work. I
12 know sometimes it's -- it's difficult work, so
13 thank you all. Appreciate it.

14 JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you, Chair, and I
15 also to thank the parties for coming today.
16 This presentation is adjourned, and we can go
17 off the record.

18 (Ending time of the hearing: 10:22 a.m.)
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1 I, Colin Wallis, in and for the State of
2 Missouri do hereby certify that the witness
3 whose testimony appears in the foregoing
4 Examination Under Oath was duly sworn by me;
5 that the testimony of the said witness was
6 taken by me to the best of my ability and
7 thereafter reduced to typewriting under my
8 direction; that I am neither counsel for,
9 related to, nor employed by any of the parties
10 to the action in which this examination was
11 taken, and further that I am not relative or
12 employee of any attorney or counsel employed by
13 the parties thereto, nor financially or
14 otherwise interested in the outcome of the
15 action.



17 within and for the State of Missouri
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