

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI**

In the Matter of Evergy Metro, Inc.)	
d/b/a Evergy Missouri Metro’s Request)	
for Authority to Implement a General)	Case No. ER-2026-0143
Rate Increase for Electric Service)	
)	

**THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC COUNSEL’S SUGGESTIONS IN SUPPORT OF
PROPOSED SCHEDULE**

COMES NOW the Office of the Public Counsel (“OPC”) and for its Suggestions in Support of Proposed Schedule, states as follows:

Facts

1. On February 9, 2026, the Public Service Commission (“Commission”) filed its *Order Giving Notice, Setting a Deadline to Intervene, Setting a Deadline to Respond to the Test Year, and Directing a Proposed Schedule*.

2. On mid-afternoon March 4, 2026, Public Service Commission Staff (“Staff”) sent out a procedural schedule it designed with Evergy Missouri Metro (“EMM or “Company”) for OPC input. The OPC responded mid-morning on March 5 with revisions proposing that the local public hearings (“LPHs”) should occur before the parties other than Evergy Missouri Metro filed direct testimony. Further, the OPC suggested that the evidentiary hearing be held on the dates the Commission ordered, and proposed both additional events and different briefing dates.

3. On March 5, 2026, the OPC sent a schedule that it believes aligns with the Commission’s February 19, 2026, *Order Suspending Tariff, Giving Notice of Contested Case Status, Delegating Authority, and Scheduling Evidentiary Hearing* and addresses the other

issues the OPC had with the schedule Staff proposed to Staff, the Company, and the parties who are seeking to intervene. Staff and EMM informed OPC that they would not support moving the LPHs. The OPC offered to discuss a procedural schedule that did not include LPH dates, but Staff and EMM declined.

4. On March 6, 2026, Staff informed Public Counsel that it would be moving forward with the procedural schedule to which Evergy Missouri Metro agreed. Due to the inability of current parties to this case to come to an agreement on the procedural schedule they believe the Commission should adopt, the OPC has chosen to file its Proposed Procedural Schedule. Staff and Evergy Metro are aware of this filing.

Argument

A. Staff's Proposed Schedule did not Follow the February 9, 2026, or the February 19, 2026, Commission Orders.

The OPC's first concern regards Staff's lack of coordination regarding the *Proposed Procedural Schedule*. On February 9, 2026, the Commission ordered, in relevant part, "No later than March 6, 2026, the parties shall submit a joint proposed procedural schedule as described in this order. The Staff of the Commission shall coordinate and file the joint proposed procedural schedule."¹ Despite this order, Staff did not provide a full proposed procedural schedule with the inclusion of items such as the List of Issues and Position Statements until it filed its proposed schedule on March 6, 2026. Further, as Public Counsel initially indicated, the hearing dates in Staff and EMM's procedural schedule do not comply with the Commission order from

¹ *Order Giving Notice, Setting a Deadline to Intervene, Setting a Deadline to Respond to the Test Year, and Directing a Proposed Schedule*, p. 2 ¶ 5, EFIS Item No. 27, Case No. ER-2026-0143 (Feb. 9, 2026).

February 19, 2026, setting the evidentiary hearing for September 28, 2026, through October 9, 2026.²

The OPC also verified with the proposed intervenor parties that the dates it is proposing would be okay for them, to ensure that these dates would not need to change if they are granted intervention.

When crafting its proposed procedural schedule, the OPC attempted to ensure that all of the parties and potential intervenors had input into its creation, including Staff and EMM. Staff and EMM did not.

B. Customer Concerns should be heard early so that parties such as the OPC and Staff can investigate them and their merits. Customer Rate Shock is likely to be a concern in this case.

As Staff asserts in its procedural schedule, much of the disagreement around the timing of the LPHs is the role that these LPHs play in the context of a rate case. Staff states that it “utilizes the LPHs to provide a summary of [its] case to the public.”³ The Public Counsel views the primary purpose of LPHs differently. While the question-and-answer portion of an LPH’s purpose is clearly to educate the public on the filed rate case, the OPC sees the purpose of the testimonial portion to permit the public to vocalize their issues, which the parties might otherwise miss. An apt example of the LPHs providing these benefits is in the recent Liberty Electric rate case, Case No. ER-2026-0261.

² *Order Suspending Tariff, Giving Notice of Contested Case Status, Delegating Authority, and Scheduling Evidentiary Hearing*, p. 3 ¶ 3, EFIS Item No. 29, Case No. ER-2026-0143 (Feb. 19, 2026).

³ *Joint Proposed Procedural Schedule*, p. 2 ¶ 2, EFIS Item No. 35, Case No. ER-2026-0143 (Mar. 6, 2026).

As Missouri’s recent policy focus has been on “Affordability,” Public Counsel believes it would be appropriate to take into account *both* the increase that the Company is requesting *and* the services that the increase would support. Members of the public are best situated to speak specifically to and provide insights on affordability that inform not only the Commission, but also the OPC, Staff, the Company, and the other parties.

On January 7, 2022, EMM requested an increase of “\$47.6 million or 5.65%.”⁴ In this case, the company is requesting an increase of “\$140.4 million or 15.19%.”⁵ If the stated policy goal in Missouri is “Affordability,” the OPC believes that giving customers the chance to be heard earlier in this case where the Company is requesting an increase that is nearly 3x the one it requested a mere 4 years ago is appropriate. Therefore, Public Counsel believes that LPHs should be held early enough that public testimony can be heard and considered prior to the filing of non-company party direct.

⁴ *Minimum Filing Requirements*, p. 5, EFIS Item No. 2, Case No. ER-2022-0189 (Jan. 7, 2022).

⁵ *Minimum Filing Requirements*, p. 5, EFIS Item No. 2, Case No. ER-2026-0143 (Feb. 6, 2022).

WHEREFORE, the OPC respectfully requests the Commission adopt and order The Office of the Public Counsel's Proposed Procedural Schedule.

By: /s/ Anna Kathryn Martin
Anna Kathryn Martin (Mo Bar #72010)
Associate Counsel
P. O. Box 2230
Jefferson City MO 65102
(573) 526-1445
(573) 751-5562 FAX
anna.martin@opc.mo.gov

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that copies of the forgoing have been mailed, emailed, or hand-delivered to all counsel of record this 9th day of March, 2026.

/s/ Anna Martin