FILED
November 9, 2026
Missouri Public
Service Commission

Exhibit No. 29

Evergy Missouri Metro – Exhibit 29
Direct Testimony of Darrin R. Ives
Case No. ER-2026-0143

Exhibit No.:	
Issue:	Affordability
Witness:	Darrin R. Ives
Type of Exhibit:	Direct Testimony
Sponsoring Party:	Evergy Missouri Metro
Case No.:	ER-2026-0143
Date Testimony Prepared:	February 6, 2026

MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

CASE NO.: ER-2026-0143

DIRECT TESTIMONY

OF

DARRIN R. IVES

ON BEHALF OF

EVERGY MISSOURI METRO

Kansas City, Missouri

February 2026

Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION 1

II. AFFORDABILITY 3

DIRECT TESTIMONY

OF

DARRIN R. IVES

Case No. ER-2026-0143

I. INTRODUCTION

Q: Please state your name and business address.

A: My name is Darrin R. Ives. My business address is 1200 Main, Kansas City, Missouri 64105.

Q: By whom and in what capacity are you employed?

A: I am employed by Evergy Metro, Inc. and serve as Senior Vice President – Regulatory and Government Affairs for Evergy Metro, Inc. d/b/a as Evergy Missouri Metro ("Evergy Missouri Metro," "EMM," or the "Company"), Evergy Missouri West, Inc. d/b/a Evergy Missouri West ("EMW"), Evergy Metro, Inc. d/b/a Evergy Kansas Metro ("EKM"), and Evergy Kansas Central, Inc. and Evergy South, Inc., collectively d/b/a as Evergy Kansas Central ("EKC"). These are the operating utilities of Evergy, Inc. ("Evergy").

Q: Who are you testifying for?

A: I am testifying on behalf of Evergy Missouri Metro.

Q: What are your responsibilities?

A: My responsibilities include oversight of the Company's Regulatory Affairs Department, as well as all aspects of regulatory activities including policy, cost of service, rate design, revenue requirements, regulatory reporting**,** and tariff administration. I also have responsibility for state and federal legislative and government policy and affairs, customer

support for our largest customers, economic development activities and energy solutions and products.

Q: Please describe your education, experience, and employment history.

A: I graduated from Kansas State University in 1992 with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with majors in Accounting and Marketing. I received my Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 2001. I am a Certified Public Accountant. From 1992 to 1996, I performed audit services for the public accounting firm Coopers & Lybrand L.L.P. I was first employed by Kansas City Power & Light Company in 1996 where I held positions of progressive responsibility in Accounting Services and was named Assistant Controller in 2007. I was named Senior Director – Regulatory Affairs in April 2011. I served as Vice President – Regulatory Affairs beginning in August 2013 until I was named Senior Vice President – Regulatory and Government Affairs in September 2025.

Q: Have you previously testified in a proceeding at the Missouri Public Service Commission ("PSC" or "Commission") or before any other utility regulatory agency?

A: Yes. I have previously testified at the Commission**.**

Q: What is the purpose of your direct testimony?

A: The purpose of my testimony is to address the issue of affordability. In particular, I discuss how Evergy Missouri Metro's prudent infrastructure investments and targeted customer programs support long-term affordability for all customers and how the Company's rates compare to regional and national averages.

Q: Please summarize your testimony.

A: My testimony explains that Evergy Missouri Metro prioritizes the affordability of its rates while maintaining safe and adequate service. In doing so, the Company's rates have remained competitive nationally, largely aided by programs that broaden cost recovery while demand increases. In particular, the Company's prudent capital investments, such as in transmission and distribution infrastructure, have supported long-term customer rate affordability. Moreover, the testimony demonstrates EMM's comprehensive affordability strategy for vulnerable customers, including bill assistance, flexible billing, and energy-efficiency and weatherization programs, alongside ongoing modernization of metering and customer systems to enhance service and manage costs.

II. AFFORDABILITY

Q: Is the affordability of electricity for customers an important issue for Evergy Missouri Metro?

A: Yes. Rate affordability for customers is and always has been a high priority for Evergy Missouri Metro and all of Evergy's operating utilities. Evergy understands that its customers, as well as customers nationally, face rising costs for many daily necessities, and the Company is sensitive to the impact that electric bills have on household budgets. We understand that costs associated with necessary safety and reliability investments can put pressure on affordability. To balance these priorities, Evergy is committed to managing the costs within its control to keep prices as low as possible, even as external factors like fuel prices and supply chain issues present challenges. Additionally, as discussed below, and by Katie McDonald (Vice President of Public Affairs), the Company also offers various programs to assist customers who are struggling to pay their bills. The issue of rate

affordability for all customers is also discussed by Kevin Gunn (Vice President of Regulatory and Government Affairs).

Q: What impact will increasing demand have on affordability?

A: As discussed in detail by EMM witness Zac Gladhill (Vice President of Strategy and Long-Term Planning), the demand for electricity is outpacing supply from our generation fleet. See Southwest Power Pool, "Our Generational Challenge: A Reliability Future for Electricity" at 3 (Summer 2024). But as discussed by both Mr. Gunn and Mr. Gladhill, there is no evidence to support the idea that the demand increase, particularly from data centers, is causing rates to increase, especially in Missouri.

Q: How does system reliability relate to affordability for customers?

A: Reliability and affordability are inseparable. A strong, well-maintained grid lowers total customer costs over time by avoiding the higher expenses associated with unplanned failures, emergency repairs, and prolonged outages. Outages impose costs on households and businesses, including lost productivity and spoilage, and can require costly utility interventions after the fact. As discussed by EMM witness Ryan Mulvany (Vice President of Power Delivery Administration), targeted, prudent infrastructure investment before equipment failures reduces lifecycle costs and keeps service dependable, a core component of affordability.

Q: How does Evergy Missouri Metro balance the need for capital investment with customer affordability?

A: Evergy Missouri Metro's investment strategy focuses on long-term benefits and is guided by its integrated resource plan ("IRP"), statutory obligations, and extensive stakeholder

engagement with the Commission, Staff, and the Office of the Public Counsel ("OPC").[1] While Evergy recognizes the near-term rate impact of these investments, they are critical for modernizing the grid, enhancing reliability, and meeting growing demand. As discussed by the Commission, because of SPP's increased planning reserve margin requirements – 36% winter-season and 16% summer-season, effective summer 2026 and winter 2026/2027 – and other related factors, utilities, such as EMM must have the ability "to guard against unplanned conditions or events on the regional power grid."[2] EMM's capital investment plans reflect these directives and are necessary to provide safe, adequate, and reliable service at the lowest reasonable long-term cost.

Q: How do Evergy Missouri Metro's rates compare to its peer utilities and the national averages?

A: As discussed in detail by Company witness Kevin Gunn, Evergy Missouri Metro's rates are competitive within the West North Central region and compare favorably to national residential averages. This competitive position is supported by the Large Load Power Service Rate Plan that the Commission approved, as well as the safeguards that help broaden cost recovery across a larger energy volume, ensuring that all customer classes benefit from economic growth. Overall, EMM's rates remain well-positioned versus its public utility peers while enabling the reliability investments needed for long-term affordability.

---

[1] See Report & Order at 8-9, 11-12, 15, 23, 32, 35, In re Evergy Mo. Metro & Evergy Mo. West App. for Certificates of Pub. Conven. and Necessity for Nat. Gas Elec. Production Facilities, No. EA-2025-0075 (July 31, 2025) ("2025 Evergy Gas CCN Case"); Ex. 300, J. Seaver Rebuttal 3, No. EA-2025-0075; Ex. 200, Staff Report & Recommendation ("Staff Rec.") at 46, No. EA-2025-0075.

[2] See Report & Order, ¶ 31 at 12, No. EA-2025-0075, 2025 Evergy Gas CCN Case.

Q: What factors led to this comparative rate position for EMM?

A: Several factors have contributed to EMM's rate competitiveness. EMM's diversified generation portfolio, prudent fuel planning, and ongoing grid modernization have reduced lifecycle costs and supported stable pricing. Additionally, operational efficiencies from investments in advanced metering, customer systems, and analytics have improved reliability and cost control, reinforcing the Company's rate competitiveness.

Q: How is Evergy Missouri Metro addressing affordability for vulnerable customers?

A: Evergy Missouri Metro recognizes that rising energy costs can create financial challenges for customers.

In a typical month, approximately 10-11% of the Company's customers are in arrears. Evergy Missouri Metro's affordability strategy is driven by sustained investment in customer-side efficiency and weatherization that reduces kilowatt per hour usage, as well as programmatic bill-payment and budget-management tools that prevent disconnections and avoid higher downstream costs. These measures reduce arrearages, cut outage-related costs, and lower total customer bills over time.

As discussed in detail by Company witness Katie McDonald, for immediate relief Evergy Missouri Metro connects customers to bill-assistance resources and provide flexible billing options. We inform customers about non-Evergy assistance resources in Missouri, such as the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program ("LIHEAP"), the Earned Income Tax Credit ("EITC"), and the Missouri State Assistance for Housing Relief ("SAFHR") for Homeowners. EMM also provides bill-flexibility and aid, including an Adjustable Due Date, online payment plans, an Average Payment Plan, the Special Friend

Program, the Economic Relief Pilot Program in partnership with the Salvation Army, and our Dollar-Aide assistance fund.

Additionally, to deliver durable reductions in bills, EMM invests in weatherization and energy-efficiency programs that lower usage. Programs such as the Income-Eligible Weatherization Program supplement federal funds to provide no-cost in-home upgrades and can reduce energy use by up to 35%. Through the Missouri Energy Efficiency Investment Act ("MEEIA"), programs like the Hard-to-Reach Homes Program and On-Bill Financing ("PAYS") provide no-cost upgrades and financing for efficiency investments. Over the past 10 years the Income-Eligible Multi-Family Program ("IEMF") has improved efficiency in over 5,000 buildings and 55,000 income-eligible units across Missouri in the last decade.

Moreover, Evergy Missouri Metro is piloting additional affordability initiatives to address root-cause drivers of energy burden and housing instability. These include the Evergy Zero Energy Ready — New Homes Pilot, supporting construction of super-efficient homes for low-income families; the Kansas City Low-Income Leadership Assistance Collaborative ("KC-LILAC") which integrates energy, health, and structural repair resources; the Critical Needs Pilot for medically vulnerable customers; and the Rehousing Pilot which helps remove utility-arrearage barriers to housing.

Taken together, these Missouri programs stabilize customers in the short term and reduce bills structurally over the long term. This integrated approach is essential to making electricity more affordable and keeping vulnerable customers connected to safe, reliable service. Evergy continues to address issues of affordability faced by low-to-moderate income customers, and elderly residential customers, as described in Evergy's November

14, 2025, response in the Commission's Working Group, In re: Working Case for Commission Review and Consideration of Utility Assistance Programs and Special Alternative Residential Customer Rates, No. OW-2026-0085.

Q: Do you believe that Evergy Missouri Metro will continue to provide service at competitive rates within the region?

A: Yes. As discussed by Mr. Mulvany, the Company will continue to make significant investments in technology and infrastructure that benefit customers. Such investments will allow EMM to function as an efficient, reliable, and resilient service provider. The Company's investment into its infrastructure is consistent with investor-owned utilities ("IOU") across the United States. According to the Edison Electric Institute, IOUs are projected to invest $1.1 trillion in capital expenditures related to transmission and distribution systems, as well as other energy projects between 2025 and 2029."[3] As demand grows and the system's operating conditions evolve, stakeholders have underscored the need to maintain adequate capacity and modernize infrastructure to manage reliability risks. By prudently investing now, Evergy reduces future costs and preserves affordability by limiting emergency spending, reducing outage frequency and duration, and improving operating efficiency.

Additionally, Evergy has invested millions of dollars over the last decade in advanced metering technology and customer information and services platforms to increase efficiencies, enhance Evergy's customers' ability to make informed decisions about their energy consumption and enhance their experience with their utility. In addition,

[3] See 2024 Financial Review: Annual Report of the U.S. Investor-Owned Electric Utility Industry at 7-8, Edison Elec. Institute (July 23, 2025).

Automated Meter Infrastructure ("AMI") and customer information systems are core platform investments that also serve as a foundation for unlocking additional customer benefits over time as new use cases continue to be developed and adopted in the industry. As discussed by Mr. Mulvany and Ms. McDonald, in the past several years, Evergy has completely converted and upgraded many core computer and customer information systems intended to meet consumer expectations by enhancing customer service and experience. An additional benefit of these technological upgrades is that they will allow Evergy to maintain automated support and fewer customized solutions. That foundation has allowed us to migrate EMM customers into the core customer information systems, completing the consolidation of billing and metering systems. The entire multi-year project addressed the technological limitations that have kept Evergy from pursuing much needed customer enhancements.

Historically, customer expectations have revolved around reliable service and fair pricing. While those expectations remain paramount, customers now expect service features like proactive notifications, personalized interactions, and connected experiences across channels. Transforming Evergy's customer experience to inform and empower Missouri consumers is key to being the energy company Missourians deserve. Now that nearly all of EMM's legacy and unsupported technology has been modernized, the Company is transitioning to a technology roadmap that keeps these systems up to date in order to continually expand benefits for customers. In fact, Evergy's customers are already receiving benefits from customer service enhancements, such as enhanced customer notifications and improved Intelligent Virtual Assistance ("IVA") interactions. These

enhancements give both business and residential customers the ability to start service and perform other self-service functions.

Q: How are Evergy's infrastructure capital investment plans consistent with its efforts to address affordability issues?

A: Consistent with industry best practices, Evergy has adopted a comprehensive strategy which recognizes that deferring necessary investments creates a cycle of reactive, and often more expensive, maintenance costs that will burden customers with higher rates. Reducing spending in critical infrastructure is ultimately detrimental to customers and exacerbates affordability problems.[4]

The Company's capital expenditures plan, aligned with regulatory priorities, focuses on asset health, reliability, and risk reduction to lower total costs over the long term. This strategy of planned, proactive work is more cost-effective than emergency restoration, reduces customer disruption, and mitigates the economic losses that customers face when power is unavailable. A less reliable grid not only inconveniences customers, but can also have significant economic impacts on businesses that depend on uninterrupted power, such as hospitals, residential retirement facilities, data centers, and other large load customers.

By investing thoughtfully in infrastructure, Evergy avoids more costly problems, ensures grid reliability for all customers, and supports current and future economic activity which is consistent with guidance from the Commission, Staff and OPC. Evergy is focusing investments where they most effectively improve reliability and reduce long-term

[4] See generally *US Power, Gas Utilities look to Reduce Costs while Investing Billions,* Platts Megawatts Daily at 12-14 (Dec. 30, 2025).

costs, recognizing that a modern, robust grid is necessary to serve both existing customers and new economic activity. Therefore, the prudent course is to invest thoughtfully in infrastructure to prevent these costlier problems from arising and to ensure that the grid can support the current and future needs of Evergy Missouri Metro's customers.

Q: Please summarize your testimony

A: Evergy Missouri Metro prioritizes affordability while maintaining safe and reliable service for all customers. Despite trends in other parts of the country that face rising electricity rates driven by changes in local wholesale electricity markets, state policies, data centers, and extreme weather, the Company's rates remain competitive within the region and compare favorably to national averages. Prudent, proactive infrastructure investments are essential for long-term affordability, as they reduce lifecycle costs by preventing more expensive outages and emergency restorations. The Company addresses both near-term affordability pressures and long-term energy burden through a comprehensive strategy that includes customer assistance programs, bill-flexibility tools, and energy-efficiency initiatives. Looking ahead, continued investments in grid modernization and customer-facing technologies will support competitive rates, mitigate long-term costs, and ensure the grid can reliably serve all customers and new economic activity.

Q: Does this conclude your testimony?

A: Yes.

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 Rate Increase for Electric Service	))))	Case No. ER-2026-0143

AFFIDAVIT OF DARRIN R. IVES

STATE OF MISSOURI)
) ss
COUNTY OF JACKSON)

Darrin R. Ives, being first duly sworn on his oath, states:

1. My name is Darrin R. Ives. I work in Kansas City, Missouri and I am employed by Evergy Metro, Inc. as Sr. Vice President – Regulatory and Government Affairs.

2. Attached hereto and made a part hereof for all purposes is my Direct Testimony on behalf of Evergy Missouri Metro consisting of eleven (11) pages, having been prepared in written form for introduction into evidence in the above-captioned docket.

3. I have knowledge of the matters set forth therein. I hereby swear and affirm that my answers contained in the attached testimony to the questions therein propounded, including any attachments thereto, are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Darrin R. Ives

Subscribed and sworn before me this 6th day of February 2026.

Notary Public

My commission expires: April 26, 2029

ANTHONY R WESTENKIRCHNER
NOTARY PUBLIC - NOTARY SEAL
STATE OF MISSOURI
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES APRIL 26, 2029
PLATTE COUNTY
COMMISSION #17279952