

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

In the Matter of the Request of The Empire)
District Electric Company and The Empire)
District Gas Company for Waiver of a Dual) **File No. AO-2020-0184**
Branding Requirement Regarding the)
Continued Use of the Empire District Name)
for Electric, Gas, and Water Operations)

STATUS REPORT

COMES NOW the Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission (“Staff”), by and through the undersigned counsel, and respectfully states as follows:

1. On December 23, 2019, The Empire District Electric Company and The Empire District Gas Company (collectively, “Empire”) filed a motion for waivers. Empire requests that the Commission waive a portion of the *Stipulation and Agreement* approved by the Commission in File No. EM-2016-0213.

2. That portion of the *Stipulation and Agreement* required that Empire operate under the Empire District brand name, or a co-branding designation involving the name Liberty Utilities (“Liberty”), for a period of five years following its merger with Liberty.¹ Empire is requesting relief from the requirement.

3. On December 27, 2019, the Commission issued its *Order Directing Notice, Setting Intervention Deadline, and Directing Staff Filing*. The Commission issued an intervention deadline of January 30, 2020, and ordered Staff to file a recommendation or status report no later than that same day.

4. As of the date and time of this filing, no parties have filed to intervene in this matter.

¹ From January 1, 2017 through January 1, 2022.

5. Staff has issued a number of data requests to help its review, provide feedback, and continue discussions with Empire. Staff is awaiting Empire's responses, and will need time to analyze and follow-up before a recommendation can be completed.

6. Due to the need for more information, Staff respectfully requests an extension to file its recommendation. While Staff believes that 30 days would be sufficient, Staff respectfully requests that, in the Commission's order, Staff is given the opportunity to file a status report in lieu of a recommendation, if more time is warranted.

WHEREFORE, Staff respectfully submits this *Status Report* for the Commission's information and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Travis J. Pringle

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that copies of the foregoing have been mailed, hand delivered, transmitted by facsimile or electronically mailed to all counsel of record this 30th day of January, 2020.

/s/ Travis J. Pringle