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STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Local Public Hearing

September 17, 2008

Wohl Community Center, St. Louis, Missouri

Volume 10

In the Matter of Union Electric)
Company d/b/a AmerenUE's Tariffs) Case No. ER-2008-0318
To Increase Its Annual Revenues)
For Electric Service)

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:
Morris L. Woodruff, Deputy Chief Regulatory Law Judge
Commissioner Connie Murray
Commissioner Kevin Gunn

1 REPORTED BY:
2 Patsy A. Hertweck, CCR No. 1276(T)
3 MIDWEST LITIGATION SERVICES
4 711 North Eleventh Street
5 St. Louis, Missouri 63101
6 (314) 644-2191

7 COUNSEL FOR THE AMERENUE:
8 Thomas M. Byrne
9 Attorney at Law
10 Managing Associate General Counsel

11 Legal Department
12 1901 Chouteau Avenue
13 St. Louis, Missouri 63166-6149
14 (314) 554-2514

15 COUNSEL FOR OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC COUNSEL:
16 Mr. Lewis R. Mills, Jr.
17 DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

18 200 Madison Street
19 Post Office Box 2230
20 Jefferson City, Missouri 65102
21 (573) 751-1304

22 GENERAL COUNSEL FOR MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION:
23 Mr. Nathan Williams
24 General Counsel
25 P. O. Box 360
26 Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

27 MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION STAFF:
28 Steve Rackers, Staff
29 Gregg Ochoa, Public Information Coordinator
30 Public Service Commission

1 PROCEEDINGS

2 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: I hope everyone
3 can hear me. I know it kind of echos in this room. If you
4 can't hear me, let me know. Just wave your hand.

5 All right. I'm Morris Woodruff. I'm the
6 regulatory law judge that's been assigned to this case, and
7 I'll be presiding over the evidentiary hearing when it
8 starts in November.

9 Let me introduce the person on my left here.
10 This is Connie Murray. She's one of our commissioners.

11 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Good evening.
12 I'm looking forward to hearing what you have to say to us
13 this evening. Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: I see we have a
15 court reporter here. She's the only Commissioner here
16 tonight. We have another Commissioner who may be here a
17 little later, Commissioner Kevin Gunn. He was going to be
18 delayed a little bit in getting here.

19 As you can see, we have a court reporter here.

20 PUBLIC MEMBER: How many commissioners
21 are there?

22 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: There are five
23 commissioners altogether, and we're doing 14 of these
24 hearings, so they're not all coming to all of the hearings.

25 We have a court reporter here, and she's

1 making a transcript of the testimony today. And we're also
2 recording this through our web-cast so that the other
3 commissioners will both be able to read the transcript, and
4 if they want to, they can see the video of this also so that
5 anything you say will be seen by all the commissioners, not
6 just the ones that are here tonight.

7 As I said, we're here to hear what you have to
8 say, and I'm going to ask people to come up and testify. We
9 have 15 names on the list so far. If you come up to the
10 podium to testify, I'll ask you to raise your right hand,
11 and I'll swear you in just like on Court TV and we'll hear
12 -- listen to what you have to say.

13 The Commissioners may have questions for you
14 afterward, and there are some attorneys here from the --
15 from Ameren and from our staff and from the Office of Public
16 Counsel. They may have some questions for you also.

17 And since we do have -- I have 15 names on the
18 list right now, so I'd ask that you try to keep your
19 comments relatively short so that everybody has a chance to
20 testify and we're not going late at night and people can't
21 -- get tired and have to leave.

22 I see some questions in the back. Yes, sir.

23 (Question from a member of the public.)

24 I heard you. The question was. Is there a
25 Commissioner from St. Louis? The Commissioners are not

1 appointed by district or anything. So each Commissioner
2 represents the entire state.

3 Commissioner Gunn, who will be arriving here
4 later, happens to be from St. Louis. Some of you may know
5 him, but he does not represent just St. Louis.

6 Okay. Yes, sir.

7 (Question from a member of the public.)

8 Yes, you can do that. An affirmation is
9 perfectly acceptable.

10 MS. REPORTER: I can't hear the people
11 back there. If you could repeat their questions.

12 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: All right.
13 That last question was is an affirmation instead of an oath
14 okay, and I said it was.

15 The court reporter can't hear you when you're
16 asking questions from back in the audience. All right.
17 I've lost my mike. There it is.

18 Before we start with the first witness, I want
19 to ask the attorneys to enter their appearance as well.
20 Attorney for Ameren UE?

21 MR. BYRNE: Yes, your Honor, I'm Tom
22 Byrne. I'm the attorney for Ameren UE. My address is 1901
23 Chouteau Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63103.

24 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: And for the
25 Office of Public Counsel?

1 MR. MILLS: Your Honor, Lewis Mills.
2 Counsel for the Office of Public Counsel. My address is P.
3 O. Box 2230, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102.

4 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Thank you, and
5 do we have an attorney here in Jefferson City?

6 MR. HAGEMEYER: Jeremey Hagemeyer,
7 staff counsel. P. O. Box 360, Jefferson City, Missouri
8 65102.

9 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Okay. I'm
10 going to call the first witness, and that is Delores
11 McMillan.

12 Commissioner Kevin Gunn has joined us.

13 (Microphone difficulties.)

14 Ms. McMillan, if you'd please raise your right
15 hand.

16 (Thereupon, Witness McMillan was sworn
17 on her oath by Commissioner Woodruff, and
18 testified as follows:)

19 Thank you. Could you tell us your -- spell
20 your last name for us.

21 MS. McMILLAN: It's M-C-M-I-L-L-A-N.
22 McMillan.

23 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Thank you. You
24 can put your hand down. And what's your address?

25 MS. McMILLAN: 8307 Garfield.

1 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: All right.

2 Thank you. What would you like to tell us?

3 MS. McMILLAN: You know what I would
4 like to tell you all because I gave you a copy of that. I
5 think it's been about a month ago. I don't know the date on
6 that copy right there because I left some of my papers over
7 at my chair. Ninety-four dollars was sent to me in the
8 mail, a disconnection notice. I am 63 years old, and I was
9 shocked.

10 You know in the past, I had been going to my
11 congressman, Congressman William Lacey Clay, an old man,
12 Senior William Clay, fighting Laclede Gas Company and Union
13 Electric. And I have never had nothing like this to happen
14 to me. My electric is going to be cut off in the summertime
15 for \$94. You have the bill there, don't you?

16 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Yes, ma'am, you
17 gave me the bill.

18 MS. McMILLAN: And I would like to know
19 what -- why they are so ornery to poor people. Corporate
20 welfare. Okay. I have some more to say that I would like,
21 but you all present to it, because she's taking the notes
22 down.

23 I would like to know if the CEO, the president
24 of UE and the vice president are here. I wish to God one
25 day they'd show up at one of these meetings because I come

1 to all of them, and I'm tired. And I would like to see
2 somebody that has some weight, other than these associates.
3 Although this is what I would like to know.

4 Have they ever skipped their medication and
5 food to pay a high utility bill like I have done. You
6 understand me? I have to decide whether I want to take my
7 high blood pressure medication or either pay UE or Laclede
8 Gas Company or either the St. Louis Water Company.

9 Okay. I'm running down the street trying to
10 catch buses if I don't have a car. Do you know how many
11 people I hear running down the street or walking on highways
12 trying to catch buses because they cannot afford no car no
13 more because they are paying utility bills and trying to
14 keep their livelihood going. I want to know have they ever
15 done that.

16 Have they ever stood on a corner waiting and
17 wondering if the BiState is going to come or any other
18 transportation is going to come. I also would like to know
19 are they working two and three jobs. I'm 63 years old and
20 trying to pay these utility bills, trying to buy food,
21 trying to hold on to some of your medication.

22 I would also like to know do they have health
23 insurance, life insurance, car insurance and all kind of
24 other insurance, because I can't afford all these things. I
25 would like to know, because they are corporate welfare.

1 They are draining poor people's job so they should have all
2 this.

3 Okay. And I would like to know about their
4 salary. Are they receiving minimum wage? Because you know
5 what, the last time minimum wage was increased was not too
6 long ago. I think it was in January, and you know what, it
7 went on ten years before they decided to increase minimum
8 wage. And you know what they start off with? Six dollars
9 and seventy-five cents, and I think it's against the law
10 anybody -- everybody in here that's working or anybody else
11 that's working should be making \$25 an hour or more.

12 It shouldn't be no less than that to keep up
13 with this cost of living. If the government can fill all
14 these corporate welfare, they can do better by their
15 citizens.

16 If congressmen can turn around and vote
17 themselves a high salary, because they got a salary not too
18 long ago when they got this little minimum wage law. They
19 got a \$4,000 raise, our representatives and our senators.
20 Did I get a \$4,000 raise? No way, and never would get it.

21 My little job they pay like 15 cents or either
22 50 cents, and that's all I get per hour if I get there, and
23 I have to remind my boss to give it to me. You understand?

24 Because they're hoping I'll forget because I'm
25 63 years old and I'm old. And I'm tired. And I think

1 everybody else is tired in the state of Missouri. I speak
2 for everybody because, you know what, there should be a mass
3 of people lining up out there, and there shouldn't nobody be
4 able to get up and talk about it should be so many people
5 out here to let you all know we are tired.

6 And you know what? If we could find an honest
7 lawyer, an honest and decent lawyer, to start suing all
8 companies, you all would stop this madness. Because I'm
9 going to tell all you all, \$8.66 is a lot. It's going to be
10 more than that because I have seen it done. You all have
11 said one thing, and turn around and did another.

12 Now, you take that home with you.

13 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Ma'am, you want
14 me to keep a copy of this?

15 MS. McMILLAN: You keep a copy of that.

16 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Well, I'm going
17 to go ahead and mark it as Exhibit 1, and I'll ask the
18 parties if they have any objection to its receipt into
19 evidence?

20 All right. I don't see any objection, so
21 Exhibit 1 will be received into evidence.

22 (Thereupon, evidence was marked for
23 identification and entered into evidence without
24 objection as Exhibit 1.)

25 Do any of the Commissioners have any questions

1 for Ms. McMillan?

2 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: No.

3 COMMISSIONER GUNN: No.

4 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: All right. Any
5 of the parties have any questions for Ms. McMillan?

6 MS. McMILLAN: I think I done said it
7 all.

8 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: All right.
9 Thank you, ma'am.

10 All right. The next name on the list is
11 Pamela Boyd. Please raise your right hand.

12 (Thereupon, Witness Boyd was sworn on
13 her oath by Commissioner Woodruff, and testified
14 as follows:)

15 All right. Tell us your name, please.

16 MS. BOYD: My name is Pamela Boyd, and
17 I'm the executive director of a non-profit organization.
18 Our organization does not take any money from United Way or
19 getting any funding from any government.

20 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Could you come
21 a little bit closer to the microphone.

22 (Discussion between Ms. Boyd and member
23 of the audience.)

24 MS. BOYD: Mr. Say said I need to tell
25 you I'm a former area counselor Federation of Block Units.

1 I am the -- like I said, I am the executive
2 director of a not-for-profit organization, and we raised --
3 our board raised all funds for crises. And when we say
4 crises, we pay people's utility bills, we pay medicine, we
5 help them with their mortgage assistance to keep them from
6 being in the situation this lady talked about.

7 We don't cover a large area because we do
8 raise our own funds, and if we can't help them, we do make
9 sure that we follow through to connect them with somebody
10 that can.

11 I hear the testimony of the people have said
12 about people with handicapped children and senior citizens,
13 and those people are our number one concern. I have to
14 applaud Ameren because they have set up a program with us to
15 put the people on a plan where we can pay on their bill to
16 keep them from getting their utilities cut off. But a lot
17 of people seem to call us when they get a disconnection
18 notice today. They'll call us today and say they're going
19 to cut my lights off tomorrow.

20 And so our challenge is one, getting more
21 funds to support those families, and then two, is to educate
22 them on how not to get back in those situations. So we
23 connect those people with organizations that can get them
24 better jobs so they can pay those bills because we know, you
25 know, people don't want the bills to go up, but they're

1 going up. I mean, let's be for real. They're going up.

2 But at least our organization is setting the
3 tone to keep people from being in those situations where
4 they don't have utilities off, they don't have the food and
5 they don't have the gas cut off. So like I said, I applaud
6 the customer service reps that we work with because they
7 actually work with us and help us set up accounts so if Ms.
8 Jones needs assistance from us, we call Ameren and say we
9 will give them a grant for this amount of money, but we have
10 them go to management classes, parenting, life skill
11 classes. We help them get employment.

12 If Ms. Jones completes that class, then we'll
13 give Ameren the money to pay her bill. If it's a senior
14 citizen, we automatically work with them and make sure we
15 connect them with an agency that we'll pay their bill
16 because senior citizens and people that are handicapped are
17 a priority with our organization.

18 Our organization is very small, and we rely on
19 federal funding for some things, and we rely on some state
20 funding, but again as these people say in this room, money
21 is short. So we have to use our money wisely. But people
22 in this room need to be real clear. Yeah, we have senior
23 citizens that's out here suffering, but you have people
24 that's running a scam on not-for-profit organizations.

25 They will come to us today, and they will go

1 to United Way tomorrow, and we had a lady that called us and
2 said I have a \$2200 light bill. My first question to her
3 was when was the last time you paid your bill.

4 She said the last time such and such an agency
5 paid it off. Now, that's what's hurting you all. Those
6 people out there are cutting your funds off for you to get
7 help because if those people wouldn't play the system, you
8 wouldn't have these issues. That -- we recently went to an
9 emergency funding network luncheon, and the government gave
10 \$8 million for a crisis fund to United Way organizations,
11 but if this lady is asking for the funding -- and I'm just
12 using this as an example -- and these three people know
13 which agencies issue the money on what month, what do you
14 think is going to happen when she calls.

15 She doesn't get no money, and that's what's
16 going on. You've got people that's running scams on the
17 company, the organization that's doing the crisis funds.
18 You've got Urban League. You've got HDC. You've got all
19 these people that have the money, but you've got people that
20 study the system to learn when that money is available, so
21 that when the senior citizens come or the people that really
22 need it, it ain't there for them.

23 And that's what's going on. That's what's
24 going on with the system. One person said no, people can't
25 afford to pay the utilities, but these are agencies that are

1 trying to help the people. But when you've got people
2 that's trying to beat the system, it's a lose/lose for both
3 people. It's a lose/lose for the handicapped and the
4 seniors, and it's a lose/lose for those organizations.

5 So you know, I thank you all for working with
6 our organization, and like I said, we're not the United Way
7 or the Urban League that makes our -- gets all this money
8 because I have a board that actually raises the money to
9 make sure that they put it back in those communities we
10 serve. But it's going to hurt. It's going to hurt these
11 senior citizens and these people.

12 As far as with the handicapped people, we have
13 came across people that have people that were handicapped,
14 and they were going to cut their gas or lights off. But we
15 stopped it because we started working with Ameren, and we
16 got the information to them, and we paid the bill to stop
17 that process. But if they don't do what they're supposed to
18 do, it's not going to happen because Ameren doesn't know
19 that you have a child there on a respirator or Ameren don't
20 know. If you got a child on the respirator, it's referred
21 to Ameren or it's referred to whoever you coming to.

22 If you know you've got a child on a respirator
23 and you haven't paid your bill in six months, come on.
24 Let's be for real. Don't use that child as your pawn to
25 take advantage of.

1 And so we run into people in our organization
2 that's doing this, and I'm telling you. I'm not telling you
3 nothing that somebody told me. I'm experiencing this every
4 day. So you know, it's going to hurt these people in this
5 room because they are on a fixed income, and they can't
6 afford -- they can't afford a dollar more.

7 But we've got to come up with a system to help
8 the people that actually need the help, and weed out the
9 people that's taking advantage of the situation.

10 Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Thank you,
12 ma'am. Any other -- do any of the Commissioners have
13 questions?

14 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you, Ms.
15 Boyd. That was very helpful, and you said a couple of
16 things that were quite interesting. One was you send people
17 to parenting classes and other educational classes prior to
18 paying their bill or paying on their bill for them. Is that
19 correct?

20 MS. BOYD: Yes, ma'am.

21 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And is that one
22 of the ways in which your organization is able to kind of
23 cut down on this scamming or make sure that someone is not
24 trying to scam your organization?

25 MS. BOYD: Right, right, right.

1 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And your agency
2 is a very small one; is that correct?

3 MS. BOYD: Uh-huh.

4 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Is it private --

5 MS. BOYD: No, it's a not-for-profit
6 organization. The name of the organization is St. Louis
7 Connecting and Assisting Neighborhoods, and we're housed in
8 Northwest High School at 5140 Riverview. So it's a small
9 organization, and when I say small, our organization -- our
10 organization doesn't get millions of dollars from the state
11 or from the federal. And so we have a small staff, and I --
12 ironically, I volunteered as the executive director for two
13 years with the organization because I took my salary and
14 gave it back so we could make sure that we could service
15 those people in our community.

16 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And it sounds
17 like it's quite an effort that you have to make in order to
18 make sure that the people receiving help are the ones who
19 actually need it, --

20 MS. BOYD: Yes, ma'am.

21 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: -- and they're
22 not trying to game the system; is that correct?

23 MS. BOYD: Right. And I'm trying to
24 make it where now that we can be a system set up. And a lot
25 of people say well, why do you got to have all this

1 information. Because I want -- because the world is so
2 computerized now, why can't we set it up where if Ms. Jones
3 comes in, we key in her Social Security number, it's going
4 to kick back to us Ms. Jones has been to A, B and C agencies
5 and has already milked them.

6 And so we will tell Ms. Jones you have to go
7 through this program or you don't get any funding from us.
8 But the way we do it, we tell Ms. Jones if you don't go
9 through these programs, you won't get any funding from us,
10 because our goal is not to put a Band-Aid on it. Our goal
11 is to fix the problem.

12 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Do you find that
13 anybody resists going to the programs?

14 MS. BOYD: Uh-huh, yeah. We have a lot
15 of people that -- I mean, they run a scam. They'll call and
16 say well, they don't have any openings. Then we'll call the
17 counselor, and they'll say yeah, they never came down. So
18 we have a connection with the agencies to see if the people
19 have followed through.

20 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: If one person
21 goes through the programs and does receive funding from your
22 organization, do you -- do you followup to see if they are
23 actually able to pay their bills after that?

24 MS. BOYD: We call the agencies that we
25 connect them with, help them with employment or schooling,

1 and so that's our goal, is to help them so when their next
2 bill comes in -- it even teaches them budgeting. So it
3 teaches them how to put money up so you know you have the
4 money to pay Ameren, to pay your gas, you know.

5 And some of them might have to -- we might
6 have to set them up with a Pantry or get them service until
7 they can get up on their feet because like this lady said,
8 some of them are making minimum wage. So our goal is to get
9 them out of minimum wage. You know, we -- you can't take
10 care of a family with three kids on \$6 an hour. It's not
11 going to work.

12 So our agency is to help empower those people
13 so they can become productive citizens in our community.

14 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Well, thank you.

15 MS. BOYD: You're welcome.

16 COMMISSIONER GUNN: Can you hear me?

17 MS. BOYD: Uh-huh.

18 COMMISSIONER GUNN: Again, thank you
19 very much for your comments. Really appreciate you coming
20 in today.

21 Your interaction with the company so far has
22 been positive?

23 MS. BOYD: Uh-huh.

24 COMMISSIONER GUNN: Is the information
25 that they provide you helpful to you and helpful to the

1 folks that you use your agency --

2 MS. BOYD: Uh-huh.

3 COMMISSIONER GUNN: -- and their
4 programs that they have?

5 MS. BOYD: Uh-huh, they are.

6 COMMISSIONER GUNN: Easily
7 understandable and easily accessed?

8 MS. BOYD: They -- I mean, there to a
9 point, I asked -- I honestly asked one of the customer
10 service reps do you all send them to school, and they were
11 like no. I was said because you're so nice, and that just
12 blew me away.

13 This one lady called me and she said they said
14 they were -- I have a disconnection notice, but they said if
15 I could work with them and give them an agency, they will
16 work with us. So the clients that we have had that's
17 honestly trying, especially our seniors, Ameren was trying
18 to work with the people that we work with. I'll put it that
19 way.

20 You know, if they get a disconnection notice,
21 then we work with Ameren in St. Louis. This is a senior
22 citizen, this is going on, and then we connect with the
23 senior citizen.

24 COMMISSIONER GUNN: You work with a
25 special group of people over there, or is it just you call

1 up and talk to a customer service rep?

2 MS. BOYD: Just call up and talk to a
3 customer service.

4 COMMISSIONER GUNN: So it's across the
5 board?

6 MS. BOYD: Yes, sir.

7 COMMISSIONER GUNN: The people you
8 found them to be helpful?

9 MS. BOYD: Right.

10 COMMISSIONER GUNN: Is there anything
11 that they are not doing that you wish they would be doing
12 aside for more money and lower rates?

13 MS. BOYD: Yeah, more money and lower
14 rates.

15 COMMISSIONER GUNN: But that would be
16 the best of both worlds.

17 MS. BOYD: I think to me they might do
18 -- because you know like this lady said -- I'm not picking
19 on her, but she had a lot of good points.

20 COMMISSIONER GUNN: Absolutely.

21 MS. BOYD: You need -- I mean, they're
22 nice and they're really nice, but to me it's when you get a
23 disconnection notice, you are totally thrown. You know, and
24 if this is not -- especially our seniors because they were
25 raised in a generation you pay your bills. And so this is

1 really a pride thing with them, you know. I can't pay my
2 bill. That's a pride thing for them.

3 So when those customer service reps talk to
4 these people and they're getting a disconnection notice, the
5 first thing people probably say is I got a disconnection
6 notice. Like she said, I got a disconnection notice for
7 \$94. Then the rep -- because I tell them all the time, I
8 know you're looking at the screen. You see how the bill is
9 being paid. So how can you work with this person?

10 You know, and so that's what I think needs to
11 happen. They need to say, you know, how can I work with
12 you? How can I help you? She had a \$94 bill. Okay, how
13 can we work with you?

14 But if it's people that have never paid on
15 their bill since the last time, they're running a scam.

16 COMMISSIONER GUNN: Right.

17 MS. BOYD: That's just the bottom line.
18 They're running a scam. But the people like the senior
19 citizens, they're going to pay their bill.

20 COMMISSIONER GUNN: Do you think that
21 the budget billing program that they have with the company
22 is helpful, or do you think that it allows people to get
23 behind?

24 MS. BOYD: I think it's hard,
25 especially in a home in St. Louis because they have older

1 homes. They have high, high ceilings, leaky windows, and so
2 a lot of the homes, they can't afford to get the
3 weatherization to keep the house so the bills will be low.
4 So normally those budget billing, how can you pay a budget
5 billing of \$150 a month, because those kind of houses that's
6 in St. Louis they're brick homes. They hold the cold, and
7 they hold the heat.

8 So you know, it's not a win/win for the people
9 in the community.

10 COMMISSIONER GUNN: All right. Thank
11 you. That's all the questions I have. Thank you very much.

12 MS. BOYD: Okay.

13 (Discussion between Ms. Boyd and a
14 member of the public.)

15 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: All right. Do
16 any of the attorneys have any questions for Ms. Boyd?

17 Sir, we can't hear you from back there. Why
18 don't come up forward here. Tell us who you are.

19 MR. MARSH: My name is Douglas Marsh,
20 and I appreciate the comments you made, Ms. Boyd, but I do
21 have a concern. It appears that you're making it -- you're
22 making it seem that there is a very great problem with scams
23 as far as energy assistance is concerned, but what is the
24 percentage? For instance, how many people really need the
25 assistance percentage-wise and how many people are out for

1 the buck?

2 MS. BOYD: On our daily census that we
3 have, we have about 10 percent people call in that are
4 running a scam on us.

5 MR. MARSH: Okay. Okay.

6 MS. BOYD: And so 50 percent are senior
7 citizens. So we automatically assist those people. We even
8 have agencies, and ironically, they told us that October
9 they -- the senior citizens are being taken care of. So we
10 have somewhere to send our seniors. So it's about 10
11 percent of the calls that we get a day, and we get about 25
12 to 50 calls. I'd say about 35 calls a day, and it's 10
13 percent of them, or 7 to 10, they're running a scam.

14 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: We're going to
15 have to stop this inter-conversation between the people here
16 because we can't -- we can't all hear you. So I think
17 you're going to testify later, aren't you, sir?

18 MR. MARSH: No. I have a few comments
19 to say. I don't think I'll -- but I think her information
20 is helpful, but also I think you should stress that this is
21 a small percentage.

22 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Sure.

23 MR. MARSH: And the appearance was that
24 is a large -- that is a big scam being run program-wide.

25 COMMISSIONER GUNN: We have got a

1 process we're going to follow. We've got people ahead of
2 you who want to come up and talk to us a little bit. We
3 appreciate your coming up, but we need to go back to the
4 rest.

5 MR. MARSH: Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Okay. Thank
7 you. Thank you, Commissioner.

8 I think the concern was that we need to be
9 able to follow the procedure, is that what you said?

10 (Member of the public in the audience
11 making a statement.)

12 You're right. We need to keep moving down the
13 list here. The next name on the list is, I believe, it's
14 Kat Logan-Smith.

15 Good evening. If you'd please raise your
16 right hand.

17 (Thereupon, Witness Logan-Smith was
18 sworn on her oath by Commissioner Woodruff, and
19 testified as follows:)

20 All right. Tell us your name.

21 MS. LOGAN-SMITH: I'm Kathleen
22 Logan-Smith. I'm the executive director with the Missouri
23 Coalition for the Environment.

24 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: And what is
25 your address?

1 MS. LOGAN-SMITH: 6267 Delmar
2 Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63130.

3 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: All right.
4 What would you like to tell us?

5 MS. LOGAN-SMITH: I just had a question
6 about how much of this rate proposal includes expenses for
7 Calloway 2? Do you guys know that?

8 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: I'm sorry. We
9 can't answer questions.

10 MS. LOGAN-SMITH: Can't answer. That's
11 my question. Consumers are, you know -- it's bad enough to
12 face any kind of rate hike, but having a rate hike for
13 electricity that's not even coming into your home is a -- is
14 even more of a ripoff, and so we wanted to get some clarity
15 on whether that is in this rate package or not.

16 The other thing I wanted to point out is, is
17 there a way to improve the bill format so that it shows
18 people exactly and very clearly how much energy they're
19 using from month to month. Maybe in a graphical format or
20 some other way that -- that's very clear and helps people
21 see what efficiency measures can do.

22 And then the third one, and I'm not sure what
23 your abilities are here, but I would like to see Ameren
24 partner with the PSC and the citizens of the state of
25 Missouri to target efficiency projects for low-income

1 people, because citizens who can't afford utility bills are
2 the ones who need the most efficient furnaces, the most
3 efficient windows, the most well insulated home so that they
4 don't have to face the crazy electric bills in the
5 summertime and insane gas bills in the wintertime.

6 An investment in a home like that will pay
7 over decades, and with the age of our housing stock in St.
8 Louis, I suggest that it would pay lots of other dividends
9 as well.

10 And that's all.

11 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Thank you. Do
12 any of the Commissioners have questions for Ms. Smith?

13 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I don't really
14 have a question, but there are people from Ameren UE here
15 this evening. If some of them would raise their hands that
16 she could visit with, and there are people from the Missouri
17 Commission staff that are here this evening that you could
18 get your questions answered. We just can't answer -- answer
19 questions because we're going to have to decide.

20 Lewis Mills is here from the Office of Public
21 Counsel.

22 COMMISSIONER GUNN: I think
23 Commissioner Murray is right. Just to give a clarification,
24 we're in the position of fact finders here. We are going to
25 make a quasi-judicial or judicial ruling on this case at the

1 end. So we're not allowed to answer any of your questions,
2 as much as we'd like to. There -- this is just the
3 beginning of a very long process where evidence is
4 presented. And so we're not allowed in the process to
5 answer questions.

6 The public is represented in these cases very
7 ably by Lewis Mills, who introduced himself earlier. So I
8 would absolutely encourage members of the public that have
9 direct questions -- and it's not that we don't want to
10 answer them. It's that we're prohibited from doing it in
11 the process.

12 But he'll be happy to answer any questions.
13 Lita Mantel in back is from the staff of the Public Service
14 Commission that can help you, as well as the people from the
15 Ameren. So it's not that we don't want to answer the
16 questions, and it's not that we don't want to have a
17 dialogue with you. That's not really what the purpose is
18 here tonight.

19 We're here to listen, and we're doing that as
20 well as we can, and so far we've had some great comments.
21 But there are other folks in the room that will be happy to
22 talk to you and happy to answer questions, and they
23 represent all the different sides of this case. So you're
24 not just getting Ameren's side or the staff's side. You're
25 also getting someone that's looking out for the public's

1 interest on this.

2 So I encourage you to talk to them after we go
3 through the public process. Thanks.

4 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Do any of the
5 attorneys for the parties have any questions for this
6 witness? All right. Thank you, Mrs. Smith.

7 The next name on the list is Sundy Whiteside.
8 Please raise your right hand.

9 (Thereupon, Witness Whiteside was sworn
10 on her oath by Commissioner Woodruff, and
11 testified as follows:)

12 Thank you. Tell us your name, please.

13 MS. WHITESIDE: Good evening. My name
14 is Sundy Whiteside.

15 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: You might want
16 to spell it for us.

17 MS. WHITESIDE: S-U-N-D-Y.
18 W-H-I-T-E-S-I-D-E.

19 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Address?

20 MS. WHITESIDE: 5436 Genevieve.

21 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: All right.

22 Thank you. What would you like to tell us?

23 MS. WHITESIDE: I am a member of -- an
24 employee of the Human Development Corporation, HDC. I serve
25 as the director of the Technology Center. This is a public

1 safety matter which could present catastrophic consequences.

2 Since 2002, the number of households receiving
3 light, heat and low income home energy assistance has
4 increased from 4.2 million to an estimated 5.8 million in
5 2007. Even at this level, the program served only 15.6
6 percent of eligible households. The majority of these
7 households had at least one member who was elderly, disabled
8 or even a child under the age of five.

9 Unaffordable energy presents several public
10 safety consequences. Households respond to high bills by
11 choosing not to heat their homes adequately in the winter,
12 or they choose not to cool them properly during the summer
13 or they will choose to use unsafe means to heat their homes
14 or illuminate their homes.

15 For example, they will heat by a kitchen oven
16 or a barbecue grill inside of their homes, or they will
17 light their homes by candle, which is extremely unsafe and
18 dangerous.

19 Utility service shut-off directly threatens
20 health in this manner. Lack of access to energy assistance
21 also threatens health indirectly. The squeeze put on home
22 budgets by high utility bills and the threat of shut-off
23 leads to our clients at HDC -- just as Ms. McMillan
24 testified, it leads them to determine whether they're going
25 to pay on their energy bill or pay for their high blood

1 pressure medication or even food.

2 Those tradeoffs put their health at risk, and
3 threaten the safety of their well being. People,
4 particularly senior citizens, in order to keep energy cost
5 down will not turn on their air-conditioning even during the
6 hottest summer days. This places those individuals in grave
7 danger. The most deadly -- and I'm going to share with you
8 this "New York Times" article that says:

9 "The most deadly of the
10 natural disasters is the heat wave.
11 Hurricanes, tornadoes, forest
12 fires, earthquakes combined do not
13 create as many lives lost as heat
14 waves. The numbers are spiking.
15 According to the Center for
16 Climatic Research at the University
17 of Delaware, an average of 1500
18 American city dwellers die each
19 year because of the heat. Annual
20 deaths from tornadoes, earthquakes
21 and floods combined only total
22 fewer than 200 casualties."

23 So what I'm trying to say to you again, this
24 is a public safety matter that will present catastrophic
25 consequences. HDC is in support of the AARP proposal to

1 create economic incentives to help people on their energy
2 bills.

3 The bottom line is that we have to help people
4 stay alive with a depressing economy and struggling senior
5 citizens with health issues and other economic issues that
6 present themselves, we have to provide assistance and help
7 people with economic incentive programs. Those programs can
8 raise indirect assistance or programs where they are
9 educated on how to adequately weatherize their home and use
10 energy economically and safely.

11 And if they participate in those classes and
12 programs, they receive a bill credit toward their utility
13 bill. A bill credit will get more attention than a public
14 service announcement any day. So while we're spending
15 thousands creating commercials encouraging senior citizens
16 to turn on their air-conditioners when they cannot afford to
17 run them, we need to start putting money in giving them bill
18 credits. That will get their attention more and encourage
19 them more to do the safe thing and protect themselves and
20 protect their lives.

21 That's pretty much all I have to say.

22 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Thank you.

23 MS. WHITESIDE: Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Do the

25 Commissioners have any questions for this witness?

1 COMMISSIONER GUNN: I just have a quick
2 clarifying question. You're here testifying actually on
3 behalf of HDC. So this is --

4 MS. WHITESIDE: Right.

5 COMMISSIONER GUNN: -- HDC's position
6 as well as -- as well as yours?

7 MS. WHITESIDE: Yes, as well as mine.
8 I'm speaking on behalf of the director of our energy
9 program, Mrs. Jackie Hutcheson.

10 COMMISSIONER GUNN: Great.

11 MS. WHITESIDE: And I'm being followed
12 up by an energy assistance worker, Mrs. Francis Bonham.
13 She's also slated to testify as well, and she has more
14 statistics. She works in the energy assistance program
15 daily, and she can deliver you some of the daily statistics.

16 COMMISSIONER GUNN: Do you interact
17 with the company on a daily basis in terms of some of these
18 programs?

19 MS. WHITESIDE: Yes, I do.

20 COMMISSIONER GUNN: And how do you find
21 their information? Do you think the information that
22 they're providing you was clear and timely? I'm underlying
23 all this so we can just get it out of the way. I understand
24 that we'd love to fund these programs more and do all this
25 stuff, so I'm not talking about the dollars that they're

1 spending.

2 MS. WHITESIDE: Okay.

3 COMMISSIONER GUNN: I'm talking about
4 the information for -- are you able to get the information
5 from the company that's needed; do they treat you the way
6 you believe you should be treated when you call and ask them
7 for help? Are they helping you outside of the dollar
8 amounts as much as they can be helping you?

9 MS. WHITESIDE: I believe that they
10 are. I believe that we have a very good relationship with
11 Ameren UE in particular, and we can utilize them to come out
12 and support us when we hold some events to talk about energy
13 efficiency and saving energy costs in the home, and help us
14 to educate people on the new low-cost light bulbs and that
15 kind of thing.

16 But what I'm really fearful of is that this
17 rate hike will be a public safety consequence related to the
18 safety and well-being of our clients staying alive, and that
19 is what terrifies me more. And I really -- just like Mrs.
20 Boyd stated how she really is grateful for the assistance
21 from Ameren and the customer service that they provide, we
22 are truly grateful as well.

23 But what is at stake here with these
24 particular costs, given this economy and the situation of a
25 lot of our clients and their budgetary needs, this can be a

1 catastrophic consequence. And we want to stop that.

2 COMMISSIONER GUNN: Thank you very much
3 for your testimony. We appreciate it.

4 MS. WHITESIDE: Thank you. And also
5 please -- I asked that my co-worker Francis Bonham remember
6 that question, and if you have anything to elaborate on that
7 or if you want to add to it to help clarify for him, because
8 she communicates daily with Ameren in helping people and
9 clients pay their utility bills. So she can speak to that
10 and how they cooperate with us in that aspect.

11 Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Do any of the
13 attorneys have any questions for Ms. Whiteside?

14 MR. MILLS: No.

15 MR. BYRNE: No.

16 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Thank you very
17 much. The next name on the list is Bob Williams. Is there
18 a Bob Williams here?

19 MR. WILLIAMS: Oh, okay.

20 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Good evening,
21 Mr. Williams. If you'd please raise your right hand.

22 (Thereupon, Witness Williams was sworn
23 on his oath by Commissioner Woodruff, and
24 testified as follows:)

25 Thank you. And your name is Bob Williams?

1 MR. WILLIAMS: Bob Williams.

2 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: And what's your
3 address?

4 MR. WILLIAMS: 711 North Euclid.

5 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: All right.
6 Thank you. What would you like to tell us?

7 MR. WILLIAMS: First of all, I
8 originally came up to take pictures with my camera, but it
9 malfunctioned.

10 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: You need to
11 speak into the microphone.

12 MR. WILLIAMS: Oh, I'm sorry. But
13 apparently I'm supposed to testify. And I should have been
14 testifying a long time ago. To some extent I was.

15 First of all, a little history of the public
16 utilities. Initially, they were handled by various
17 municipalities, water department, gas, electric. Somebody
18 got the bright idea that we can make some money off this
19 public utility. So they began to lower the facility's
20 expectation.

21 Subsequently, people voted to turn it over to
22 the -- to private agencies, but a compromise was reached.
23 This is the result of the compromise. This is a
24 quasi-governmental function committee. This is not the real
25 power.

1 The real power is among your elected officials
2 that sit on the committee that handles public utilities, and
3 I think the -- the next group we should talk to when they
4 have a hearing is in Jeff City, or maybe we can get them to
5 come down to St. Louis like this group. This group is not
6 the real power. It is your elected officials.

7 Some of those who came early, for the
8 strangest reasons, I think you basically know who your
9 friends are. This section was empty. The people sat over
10 here. Nobody told you all to sit over here, but you knew
11 you had the same interest. And you have to understand where
12 the power is. The power is with the elected officials, and
13 don't get tired because they're counting on you to get
14 tired.

15 Okay. Keep on. Keep on. Now, the person
16 from HDC, they can get a bus to go to Jeff City because
17 that's part of their fiduciary responsibility, and that is
18 to help the people meet their representatives.

19 And once we understand that and see our power,
20 the Constitution says the highest power in the land is the
21 will of the people. Not these guys. No, no. You know,
22 because you all -- you know, they was appointed. They
23 wasn't even elected. So we need to begin the process. If
24 we're in a ward, go to the ward meeting. If they don't have
25 no meeting, tell them you're going to have a meeting. This

1 is for the ward.

2 And the legislators on that committee, they're
3 the Public Safety Committee, correct, in the House, Senate?
4 See? See how helpful they are? Anyway -- anyway because
5 it's the truth.

6 In conclusion, when we leave here, go to your
7 ward meeting. Find out who your state representative is and
8 your senator is, and once you find out who they are, then
9 you ask them to come and have some hearings on how to
10 improve the delivery of service of public utilities.

11 At one point, the last group that was hanging
12 on for the city was the water department. The last I heard,
13 they'd taken the water department away. People got a white
14 truck digging in the neighborhoods, not -- not orange.

15 The point is I was sent here to speak, and I
16 told somebody it took me a million years to get here. And
17 he said wait a minute, I'm talking to you. He said did it
18 take me a million years? I said yeah. I said but the
19 difference is you don't know your mission. We all have
20 talent, and we should use it to our advantage.

21 Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Do any of the
23 Commissioners have any questions for Mr. Williams?

24 COMMISSIONER GUNN: No.

25 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: no.

1 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: All right. Any
2 of the parties have any questions for Mr. Williams? All
3 right. The next name on the list is Rose Stephens.

4 (Thereupon, Witness Stephens was sworn
5 on her oath by Commissioner Woodruff, and
6 testified as follows:)

7 Thank you. Can you tell us your name, please.

8 MS. STEPHENS: My name is Rose
9 Stephens.

10 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: And what's your
11 address?

12 MS. STEPHENS: 3127 Norwood Avenue, St.
13 Louis, Missouri 63115.

14 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Thank you,
15 ma'am. What would you like to tell us?

16 MS. STEPHENS: Well, I think Ms.
17 Whiteside said most of what I was wanting to say, but I'm
18 going to repeat it because I'm here, and I took the time to
19 come.

20 And I am a senior citizen. You can tell by
21 the grays in my hair, but maybe you don't understand how
22 much \$8 would mean to me on a monthly basis. But on a
23 monthly basis, \$8 would do an awful lot to me or for me. My
24 income is very low, but I maintain. But if you continue to
25 continue to raise the rates, then I will be one of the

1 citizens who will be -- will have to go to HDC or one of the
2 other agencies.

3 I am -- now I am able to maintain without
4 assistance, and I am very proud that I am, and so many other
5 people are too, but if you continue to raise rates, we will
6 all be going toward HDC or other facilities, and they are
7 not going to be able to assist us.

8 So I'm asking -- I would like to keep my \$8 a
9 month because there are other things that I could do with it
10 that are necessary like medications since everything is
11 going up.

12 So I just wanted to ask very kindly that you
13 let me keep my \$8. Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Thank you,
15 ma'am. Do any of the Commissioners have any questions for
16 Stephens?

17 COMMISSIONER GUNN: I do. Ma'am, thank
18 you very much for your testimony. Do you have -- have you
19 had issues with availability or outages or anything like
20 that with your service?

21 MS. STEPHENS: Not since the last out
22 -- overall outage.

23 COMMISSIONER GUNN: The ice storm?

24 MS. STEPHENS: No, this was in the
25 summer.

1 COMMISSIONER GUNN: Okay.

2 MS. STEPHENS: We had an outage in the
3 summer about three years ago. That wasn't an ice storm.

4 COMMISSIONER GUNN: No, right.

5 MS. STEPHENS: Okay. Well, maybe --
6 maybe the summer incident came, and then the ice storm. So
7 I can remember two large -- two lengthy outages.

8 COMMISSIONER GUNN: Other than those
9 storm events, your electricity is on, and you haven't had
10 any unexplained outages or anything like that?

11 MS. STEPHENS: No, no.

12 COMMISSIONER GUNN: Okay.

13 MS. STEPHENS: But I will have one if I
14 don't pay my electric bill, and I will not be paying my
15 electric bill if you raise it.

16 COMMISSIONER GUNN: Thank you very much
17 for coming out. Appreciate it.

18 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Do any of the
19 parties have any questions of Mrs. Stephens? Thank you.

20 Next name on the list is Doris Baltimore.

21 MS. BALTIMORE: I pass.

22 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Pass, okay.

23 And Fran Bonham. Please raise your right hand.

24 (Thereupon, Witness Bonham was sworn on
25 her oath by Commissioner Woodruff, and testified

1 as follows:)

2 And your name is Francis Bonham?

3 MS. BONHAM: My name is Fran -- Francis
4 Bonham. B-O-N-H-A-M. I live at 4020 South Spring, St.
5 Louis.

6 I am an employee of HDC as my co-worker. I
7 don't presume to speak for the agency. I'm speaking for
8 myself. I do work in the Energy Assistance Department, so I
9 have quite a bit of experience with this. I'm just going to
10 give you some statistics that I jotted down. And I'm sorry.
11 I'm comparing apples and oranges because the statewide
12 statistics are for this year. The RHDC statistics are for
13 last fiscal year.

14 But our energy assistance program statewide
15 served 140- -- or had 146,897 applications. These are
16 people that need help with their utilities already. The
17 people we served, the average household was 2.4. The gross
18 monthly income was \$841 a month. That's for 2.4 people.
19 That's the people that we're serving.

20 Also statewide 37 percent of the houses were
21 in threat when they came to us for assistance. Ten percent
22 were off. I can tell you for HDC our percentages are
23 higher. People are -- are more likely to be off.

24 HDC statistics, we served 38,790 people during
25 our last fiscal year. We gave light -- or for people that

1 were actually off or needed more assistance because they
2 were off or in threat, 25,000 of those 38,000.

3 We also -- HDC also has Zeller help, Dollar
4 More that we give. Ameren gives us Dollar More money. We
5 served over a thousand families last year with the Dollar
6 More, which we're very grateful to what Ameren has done for
7 us.

8 I am not here to speak against the rate
9 increase, but I am here to say when you consider what you're
10 going to do about this, will you please consider the poor,
11 the low and moderate income?

12 Low income people pay a higher percentage of
13 their income for heating, cooling, other utilities. If your
14 house cost \$200 to cool in the summer, it's \$200. It
15 doesn't matter what your income is, but if your income is
16 \$400, that's half your income. It's just impossible, and so
17 any increase is going to affect the poor and low income --
18 or low and moderate income, statistically more.

19 Also the persons who are living in more
20 inefficient housing with poor weatherization, they're using
21 older air-conditioners, heaters. They are going to be
22 affected more by this, and please consider that.

23 With the rates going up, it's going to be even
24 crueller for them for housing, for housing costs, for
25 medicines, for groceries. Everything is going up.

1 Now I would like to address someone's comment
2 that there are people who play the system. Yes, there are
3 people that play the system. They know that we are going to
4 help them with their energy assistance come -- come winter,
5 they're going to come with a disconnect notice so that they
6 can get more money. We will pay more to turn them on as if
7 they just had a threat. We would pay only that amount to
8 keep them on.

9 I'm sorry, but that to me is -- makes perfect
10 sense. That's a budgeting idea. If you work for a big
11 company and the company uses a lawyer to get out of paying
12 taxes or uses whatever is available, that's good budgeting
13 for a company, and I think it's good budgeting for a poor
14 person. Yes, there are indeed people that will abuse the
15 system, and try to get more money than they're entitled to
16 perhaps.

17 But I think that's going to be a small
18 percentage, and I think when you consider the poor, you have
19 to consider the poor that are coming to us with their
20 services off.

21 Now, I -- Ameren in the past has helped HDC in
22 the city and people in general. They have had programs that
23 would help the elderly during the summer. They would give
24 extra money or some sort of entitlement to the elderly so
25 that they would turn their air-conditioners on. I think it

1 was maybe \$100, but that's \$100 for the summer so that
2 people would use their air-conditioners. It was only for
3 the elderly.

4 I do believe that Ameren has stopped funding
5 that, but that is something that they have helped us with in
6 the past. It's something that we would like to continue,
7 and it was successful.

8 Now, as the Public Service Commission may be
9 aware, the fee last time they came to you for a rate
10 increase, one of the conditions was that you have a low
11 income program. And I actually helped administered that
12 program at HDC. What it is is a Laclede program, we'll help
13 people pay their bills. There's benefits to that program.
14 I understand that it's coming out of the Laclede's -- I
15 don't know if it's coming out of their profits, but it's
16 coming out of their pockets.

17 But the people are more responsible for their
18 bills in my experience, they are getting into good payment
19 habits because in order to be in the program, you pay your
20 bill every month or you're out of the program, and then you
21 don't get the money. And finally, at the end of the year,
22 they're not off. Their service is still on.

23 So I think that's a very valuable program that
24 you do with Laclede, and I would like to ask you to consider
25 something like that for Ameren. I would also like that you

1 do some sort of solution like that to encourage conservation
2 and weatherization. These old houses that people are living
3 in, and the landlords don't care because they don't pay the
4 bill.

5 That's something that I think that the Public
6 Service Commission will have to address, and especially
7 conservation. That if they know that their bills are going
8 to be paid by someone else, they're not interested in
9 conserving. I think that really should be a key aspect of
10 any program.

11 So in conclusion, I'm actually personally mad
12 at all the TV coverage of people saying oh, look the gas is
13 going up at the pump, and look we're paying more at the pump
14 when what's happening in our houses is actually more
15 critical. You can take a bus, you can walk, but in your
16 house, if your electricity or your gas is off, that's pretty
17 darn serious. And it's affecting the low income and
18 moderate income people more.

19 Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Do any of the
21 Commissioners have any questions? Commissioner Murray?

22 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you. Good
23 evening. Does your agency do anything like helping to
24 educate the people or asking them or requiring that they get
25 some kind of training prior to getting the financial help?

1 MS. BONHAM: No, HDC does not. Now,
2 our sister agency in the county, which is called Castle,
3 they do have a very complete education and weatherization
4 program. In the city, HDC just -- we concentrate on getting
5 the bill paid, getting the utilities back on, and we refer
6 people to the Urban League if they want weatherization.

7 We do as part of the Laclede program, we have
8 started doing educational programs in conservation, in
9 education, in budgeting, but that's just part of that
10 program, and it's not a requirement for anybody to get any
11 sort of help from us.

12 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: But you can guide
13 them in that direction; is that --

14 MS. BONHAM: We do what we can. I
15 mean, some people are interested. Our lobbies are full of
16 information. We do have classes if people are interested.

17 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: What method do
18 you use to ensure that the people who are actually getting
19 assistance from you are those who actually need it and are
20 not abusing the system?

21 MS. BONHAM: There are income
22 requirements. We do require them to show us the bill. As
23 in terms they're using their income to buy new cars or, you
24 know, cell phones or whatever, no, we don't do anything like
25 that. We don't want to be in that position where we're

1 saying you deserve it, you do not. Within the guidelines of
2 the programs, we depend on what the guidelines are.

3 If your income meets our requirements, you get
4 the help.

5 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: So there's no
6 limit on the number of times someone can reapply?

7 MS. BONHAM: As long as we have money,
8 and there is a ceiling for all of the programs. The Lickey
9 Program, the Emergency Program, the Zeller Help, the Dollar
10 More, all these programs have a maximum amount.

11 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Which is spread
12 amongst everyone that comes to you for assistance, correct?

13 MS. BONHAM: Well, for instance, I
14 believe for Zeller Help, I think it's 600 and -- no, wait.
15 I'm sorry. It's \$300 for fiscal year. If you are disabled
16 or elderly, I think I could go up to \$700, but that's it.
17 If you need \$800, you have to come up with that extra
18 hundred.

19 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you very
20 much.

21 MS. BONHAM: Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER GUNN: I'll just ask you
23 if you have any more -- the question I've been asking before
24 because you seem to interact directly with companies, in
25 terms of the information that they provide to you in terms

1 of the help, your communication with the company, do you
2 think they're doing a good job?

3 MS. BONHAM: My experience with Ameren
4 I have only had very professional interactions with them. I
5 would say that when I deal with Laclede, and I deal with
6 Laclede more because more people have gas heat and I mostly
7 deal with heat, we have access to a data base, on-line
8 access. We don't have that with Laclede, and that means
9 that I personally, for instance, do not talk to the people
10 at Ameren because somebody else talks to the people.

11 You know, we can't have everybody's phone
12 number. So we have only specific people that can call
13 Ameren. So it is more limited, but like I say, I only have
14 respect for the people that I deal with at Ameren.

15 COMMISSIONER GUNN: Okay. All right.
16 Thank you very much. No further questions.

17 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Anyone for the
18 parties have any questions?

19 MR. MILLS: No.

20 MR. BYRNE: No.

21 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: All right.

22 Next name on the list is Antionette Bullay. Would
23 you please raise your right hand.

24 (Thereupon, Witness Bullay was sworn on

25 her oath by Commissioner Woodruff, and testified

1 as follows:)

2 All right. Tell us your name, please.

3 MS. BULLAY: My name is Antionette
4 Bullay.

5 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Could you spell
6 your last name for the court reporter.

7 MS. BULLAY: 'B' as in boy, -U-L-L-A-Y.

8 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Thank you very
9 much. What would you like to tell us?

10 MS. BULLAY: I work in the community,
11 and I have heard a lot of issues up here. All right. Now I
12 want to say this. I've watched in the neighborhood. There
13 are elderly. Not only are elderly, but are regular
14 citizens, residential citizens who are on fixed incomes or
15 incomes from the State or just working regular jobs. They
16 cannot afford these bills, and if you increase them, you're
17 not only going to cause hazards, safety problems, you're
18 going to cause death and murder.

19 And you'll be ablame (sic) for murder, because
20 when somebody dies because they got to take a trash can and
21 put paper in it to keep warm because they can't afford, or
22 they go out to a center and there is no help, and I can
23 guarantee you because I worked with these people a lot.

24 We do a lot of calling to the churches, to
25 these centers. They don't have the funds for these people.

1 They do not have the funds. There are so many people that
2 are without jobs, and it's like they were saying. The lady
3 was up here saying now you're 501. That's all good and
4 dandy.

5 You have a program. That's good, but let me
6 say this to you, all of you all up in here and to your
7 families. Everybody in here know how to budget. Some of
8 them -- some of them that don't, they need that education,
9 but some of us in here have education. Some of us are
10 working two jobs. Some of us in here do not need to be in a
11 program because we got to work to pay our bills.

12 And when you're paying your light bill, your
13 gas bill, gas went up on vehicles, the taxes done went up,
14 you go to the grocery store you can't hardly eat. And
15 there's some program we're going to help you, but you got to
16 go through this.

17 I work. I work. I am tired of these programs
18 stating that these people have to be educated. A lot of
19 these people in here have a lot of mother wit and common
20 sense, and they just don't have the money. How about that?
21 And it don't mean that they need if you don't do this or you
22 don't do that, we're not going to help you. That's wrong.

23 Why don't Ameren UE ask their executives to
24 cut their pay, to go down to maybe -- now, I won't say
25 minimum wage because you went to college for your education

1 like I did, but to cut your salary? Also the disabled
2 that's on the fixed income, give them a break.

3 Not so much as us that works. We work. We
4 can still survive, but those who can't or in wheelchairs or
5 handicapped, on breathing machines, respiratory problems,
6 they can't get out and do nothing. So if you go up and
7 raise the bill, like I stated, you're going to be
8 responsible for murder because that's not just a safety or a
9 health hazard. That's going to cause a lot of deaths.

10 And behind death is somebody who caused that
11 murder. We've already had a lot of people to die this
12 summer because of the overheating results. It was on the
13 news. Have we forgot about that? And all these projects,
14 you need to put them on hold because you know why, you ain't
15 going to raise New Orleans. You ain't going to raise taxes,
16 and they just had a major disaster.

17 So poor old St. Louis who just lost all their
18 major companies for jobs. Poor old St. Louis who's still
19 struggling to try to survive. Poor old St. Louis whose
20 people are having to relocate because they don't have a
21 place to live on, and you want to go up \$8.60?

22 Has anybody said what -- and I want to ask a
23 question. Who educated here? Who's sitting up here is all
24 educated. We shouldn't even be here. Number one, should
25 not even be here, and I would say this to all of you. You

1 shouldn't be here, because if you've got an education, you
2 will sit back and think. The world is in trouble.

3 Different states done had disasters,
4 hurricanes and tornadoes, earthquakes. Are you raising
5 theirs? I think not because there ain't nothing left. Do
6 you want God to come along and wipe this out? Then who you
7 going to charge then?

8 You can't charge everybody. You can't take it
9 out on the people that are still trying to survive. You
10 can't do that. God will make a way that's going to have
11 nothing. We can't pay for other people. We're suffering.
12 We need help. If all these programs is stayed until these
13 people stop that, that's not right.

14 These people in here are educated just like
15 you are, and they don't have to go through -- now, you've
16 got people out there, Connie, but this is not the place to
17 say that. That shouldn't have been say that. That should
18 have been said somewhere else.

19 We're here fighting for \$8.60 to come off our
20 bills and not cause us a major problem. Some things are
21 said in a different place and time. Sure enough, there are
22 people that's fine, but everybody don't need to suffer. And
23 everybody ain't trying to steal. I work. Matter of fact, I
24 work two jobs. I own my own little business.

25 I can't even put it on the street because I'm

1 too scared if I could, if I'd go into a building on the
2 street, I won't be able to survive. So I keep it in my
3 apartment and work from there because I can't afford it.

4 Not only that, I'm one of them that have a
5 501C3. Trying to start a center to help the homeless,
6 people on the street. State exempt too. Can't get the
7 money for it because of disasters. There's no break, no
8 funds. So why are you robbing the people, and that's what I
9 call it, robbing.

10 If you're educated, you will sit back and
11 think they're having disasters across the world. These
12 people have not seen. They lost their homes. We just had a
13 disaster -- we had a disaster here in St. Louis. The
14 President -- there couldn't nobody go to work. The water
15 done rained. People lost their homes in the county. Got
16 flooded out. Swimming out of their apartment buildings.

17 Who in the hell is going to pay for that? The
18 sen- -- the senators where they go, United Way or whatever,
19 they're full. They don't even have shelters for people.
20 It's disaster everywhere, and we have to ban together make
21 things work. Any project, any building should be on hold
22 until these people can come back to reality and get their
23 families together, because not only is this St. Louis, but
24 there's people that had families in New Orleans and in Texas
25 from St. Louis.

1 And they're suffering. So when you sit back
2 and hold your hand out when there's nothing to get, our
3 democracy and you wonder why people are robbing, killing and
4 doing all these things. You're pushing them to it. Whoever
5 heard of anybody robbing a darn Goodwill? Tell me that.
6 Well, they just did yesterday.

7 It's getting that bad where the people got to
8 go out and rob the store, the Goodwill, to try to get money,
9 the filling stations. This is -- now, this is what's
10 causing these problems. You want them to stop and think
11 we're educated up there. You got to help the people, not
12 hinder them, not put them to sleep or put them at death.

13 Maybe it don't bother you, but if you've got a
14 family member out there because you never know when the shoe
15 going to fit, and God done already showed that he's not
16 playing. He's torn down states. He'll tore down cities.
17 He'll flood it. Those who thought they had don't have
18 anymore, but he's still blessing them for it. He's still
19 blessing, and you want to take from them too?

20 Well, I'm one of them, and I'm saying to you,
21 put your shoes in our shoes. Take your shoes off and put on
22 ours. Now, you walk the country mile that we have to walk
23 to survive. Then you come back and you sit up there and
24 tell me about it.

25 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Do any of the

1 Commissioners have any questions of this witness?

2 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: No.

3 COMMISSIONER GUNN: No questions.

4 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Any of the
5 parties have any questions? All right.

6 The next name on the list is -- I think it's
7 Floridia Womack. Did I guess right?

8 MS. WOMACK: Floridia Womack.

9 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Floridia. Good
10 evening, ma'am. Please raise your right hand.

11 (Thereupon, Witness Womack was sworn on
12 her oath by Commissioner Woodruff, and testified
13 as follows:)

14 All right. Tell us your name.

15 MS. WOMACK: Floridia Womack.

16 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: All right.

17 Could you spell that for us.

18 MS. WOMACK: F-L-O-R-D-I-A.

19 W-O-M-A-C-K.

20 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Thank you very
21 much.

22 MS. WOMACK: I live at 4907 Lee. When
23 the lights was out in the summer, I'm 75 years old, I had to
24 go to the hotel. Nobody reimbursed me anything. When the
25 lights was off in the winter, I could survive because I had

1 a fireplace. I got wood, and I could stay, and it's un- --
2 it's really uncomfortable raising my bill so high. It's
3 really sad.

4 I am 75 years old, and it's terrible, and then
5 talking about my education. I've worked hard. Educated all
6 my kids. All of them has good jobs, and I have an education
7 too. So why would somebody come up and talking about
8 educating somebody?

9 It's really terrible. I'm cold, and I'm
10 getting ready to leave because it's cold in here. I just
11 had major surgery on my knee, a knee replacement, and the
12 hospital bills, the doctor bills, the insurance, and I'm on
13 my way home. Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Thank you very
15 much. Do the Commissioners have any questions?

16 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: No.

17 COMMISSIONER GUNN: No.

18 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: The parties
19 have any questions?

20 MR. BYRNE: No.

21 MR. MILLS: No.

22 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: All right.

23 Next on the list is Maggie Williams. I have to be careful
24 about how I hold the microphone I've discovered.

25 Please raise your right hand.

1 (Thereupon, Witness M. Williams was
2 sworn on her oath by Commissioner Woodruff, and
3 testified as follows:)

4 Thank you.

5 MS. WILLIAMS: Hi. First of all,
6 evening, everybody. And thank you for coming out and
7 listening to our complaints. This is to the Commissioner.
8 I am a senior, and I am a concerned citizen. And my concern
9 is with the \$8.66 increase, could be a hardship on many
10 people, especially seniors and low-income people.

11 And if it's at all possible that this proposal
12 could be put on hold because of the decrease in the economy
13 and because of the -- you know, the situation that's going
14 on now without jobs. You know, a lot of people are without
15 jobs, and I just wondered if -- if we had to, you know, to
16 have this increase, if it could not be put on hold at this
17 time.

18 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: I forgot to ask
19 you your address also, Ms. Williams.

20 MS. WILLIAMS: My address is 4137 Peck
21 Street here in the City of St. Louis 63107.

22 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Thank you. Do
23 any of the Commissioners have any questions for Ms.
24 Williams?

25 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: No.

1 COMMISSIONER GUNN: No.

2 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: The parties?

3 MR. BYRNE: No.

4 MR. MILLS: No.

5 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Thank you for
6 coming, Ms. Williams. The next name on the list is Phyllis
7 -- is it Gilen? (No response.) The address is 4740
8 Anderson if that helps if I'm mispronouncing your name.
9 Perhaps she left already then.

10 We'll go on to the next name then, which is
11 Curtis Royston. (No response.) Curtis Royston? Okay.

12 The next name then on -- the next name on the
13 list is Jentry Roller? Trotter. Is Mr. Trotter here?

14 MR. TROTTER: Yes, thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: All right. If
16 you raise your right hand, I'll swear you in.

17 (Thereupon, Witness Trotter was affirmed
18 by Commissioner Woodruff, and testified as
19 follows:)

20 Thank you very much.

21 MR. TROTTER: Usually I'm on the
22 opposite side, and I was really surprised. This is a new
23 commission for me, especially Mr. Wolf from St. Louis
24 County, Commissioner Wolf.

25 I really wish that this many people showed up

1 when the gas bills were and still are going sky high,
2 anywhere from 15 percent and just whatever they're saying,
3 25 percent. So I hope the next time Laclede gas has a rate
4 hike that we have triple, quadruple this many people. I
5 think it's very critical.

6 I just wanted to tell this Commission and your
7 chairman is not here, but I wanted it on the record that I
8 was disappointed in his conduct as the chair. In the last
9 couple of times when we had the outage and the Commission,
10 the way -- the way they look at many of these, what I call,
11 everyday folks trying to get us reconnected.

12 In our neighborhoods, many of the people, and
13 maybe we were doing this trying to entice the workers to
14 going back on line, but we gave out to many of these people
15 cookies. We asked if there was anything we could do. We
16 were not leaning on them. They were people from out of
17 town. It was a massive outage, and so we just tried to do
18 what we could as neighborly people to help.

19 The Commission took a -- from my standpoint,
20 it was always -- I mean, there are things that people do
21 that you can beat them up for. But when you're out and
22 you're in the middle of a crisis, I think it's time for
23 people to rally around, and those were crises.

24 Also I wanted to tell you that when I lived in
25 Defiance, Missouri for 16 years, we had a program in Quiver

1 River. It's a co-operative. It's not regulated by you, and
2 my electric bill, my whole house to heat it was \$61 in the
3 middle of the winter, and the most important thing was the
4 tree trimming where, if you didn't get those trees trimmed,
5 you just were going to be in real deep problems with the
6 co-op.

7 So we had a mandatory tree trimming, and many
8 times when we were out, maybe once a winter, it wasn't going
9 up to any of our houses. It had been a pole had fallen over
10 and something. But the tree trimming in the rural areas out
11 there, it really worked. And I think it's important for the
12 people in the city and the county, I think when we look at
13 expenses, we -- incidentally, I'm not here upholding the
14 rate hike. I'm here to say that we need to look at the
15 reality of life.

16 I'm paying \$450 a month on my gas bill because
17 I missed \$250 a month payment. So they told me I had so
18 many times to pay the \$450. That's fine in a way, but when
19 I look at my gas bill and I look at my light bill, and I go
20 I really wish I was on electric again, because electric is
21 cheaper. But the reality of the matter is we're in a very
22 tight situation.

23 The whole -- the whole economic structure
24 around us is crumbling, and we're all just being hit left
25 and right. The other day during a storm, lightening hit one

1 of the -- what do you call it -- hit one of the chimney's
2 and knocked it out. So the guy told me it would cost
3 \$12,000 to replace the chimney, and the good news about that
4 is it was the chimney to three fireplaces in my -- what I
5 call my money pit. And the good news is I'm able to close
6 that now, and cut it down so I don't have to pay the
7 \$12,000.

8 But what I guess I'm trying to say to you is
9 we all are facing it, all of us in this room. We're facing
10 some kind of financial strain, I don't care who you are, I
11 don't care how much money you think you've got.

12 So I'm thinking what we need to do is we need
13 to think about tree trimming because I went all over north
14 St. Louis, all over south St. Louis, to the central west
15 end, and all my friends and neighbors were out, and most of
16 them, including the president of the NAA, Paul Brown, was
17 telling me about this tree that fell over his house. And
18 everybody was telling me about trees falling here and
19 falling there, and that's a real serious issue for the city
20 because we have a lot of old trees.

21 That's very mandatory. The fuel that's going
22 up now to power these plants, that's critical. That's
23 important for anybody, and then last but not least by my
24 standpoint like some places in the county, they've got
25 things they put underneath the grass so when they run the

1 wires, the electric wires, we're all out and they're sitting
2 up there with electricity.

3 So I think we need to look at the reality of
4 things. We can criticize these people, and we can forget
5 about the workers, what I call the people at the bottom, who
6 are out there just like we are, and many of them and even
7 including the ones who unfortunately died to try to keep the
8 electric on, which the Commission did not take into
9 consideration, that really ticked me off because people
10 actually died trying to keep us -- get our electric back up.

11 In the old days before all of us was here,
12 electric was -- it wasn't essential, but it is now. And if
13 you're a senior and if you're disabled and if you have some
14 kind of incubation or some other problems with small kids
15 and other situations like that, and I do want to say that
16 Ameren does a good job in wearing another hat -- but I'm
17 here just for me -- working with HDC and working with the
18 people from the Urban League and many of the agencies.
19 There's just not enough money to go around.

20 Somebody said Laclede Gas was coming out of
21 their pocket. That's bull. That's money coming out of the
22 Dollar Help from customers like me and you and other people
23 who participated in that, and they only pay \$5 or whatever.
24 So it's not coming out of Laclede Gas' pocket. I just want
25 you to know that.

1 The other thing was the AARP, from my
2 standpoint -- and I know I'm rambling, but I just want to
3 get things in as just a little customer -- is that AARP is
4 an interesting concept. But the problem with that is it
5 leaves out this new class of folks. It deals with the
6 seniors, but it doesn't deal with the working poor. It
7 doesn't deal with the disabled. It doesn't deal with many
8 of the people who have fallen from the middle class to the
9 lower middle class, and they're out of jobs now, and they
10 are like trying to pay their bills.

11 A lot of them have lost their mortgages, and
12 so a lot of them are in apartments trying to pay their
13 utility bills in apartments and homes.

14 So we have a crisis in America right now, and
15 I know it's tough at \$8, but I'm paying \$450 for gas and
16 \$240 monthly on a budget plan so it works out. So that's
17 kind of tough, and I want the Commission to be equally tough
18 when somebody else walks up here, other than Ameren, and
19 says we want to give you a rate hike of 25 to 40 percent. I
20 want this place full to the rafters, and I want every
21 Commissioner in Missouri right here.

22 If we don't get them, like the gentleman said,
23 we need to deal with the state people, with our elected
24 officials. As in May, hopefully we have a new and better
25 batch this time in, but we had a couple of people that I

1 called one lady on the Energy Commission, and she told me
2 she was too busy and she had a conflict. I said you had a
3 conflict? You mean you didn't want to vote to help poor
4 people because you had a conflict?

5 So I guess what I'm trying to say is that we
6 need to rally together and understand that we are facing the
7 reality, and the reality is unfortunately in this society
8 and unfortunately in this economic conditions, that we're
9 faced with the need to trim trees. Either you trim them or
10 I trim them, and nobody in Missouri can tell me how
11 expensive tree trimming is because we've all been through
12 those tree trimmers. Where these people come from -- I
13 don't know where they come from out of the strange places of
14 -- nothing personal -- from the Boot Hill. They come all
15 the way up to Missouri and they're going to tree trim us and
16 charge us an arm and a leg because we had to pay.

17 So the questions is, if there's some sort of
18 tree trimming that you guys, Ameren, can work out, it's
19 worth it. There's no way that we can take the electric and
20 put it underneath the ground. You got to figure out a way
21 to do that.

22 And we've got to figure out a way -- I'm not
23 going to go through all the wonderful things the agencies
24 said and all the great things that they're doing and the
25 things that Ameren and them are doing to try to make a

1 difference. There's just not enough money to go around. We
2 could pick up the phone to pleas to Senator McCaskil and to
3 Kit Bond who supports the lighting program, and we can tell
4 them to give us more federal dollars. We don't have enough
5 federal dollars coming in here.

6 We can pick up the phone to the new governor,
7 whoever that will be, and ask them to get more money out of
8 the state. And we can put more money into and give more
9 money to our local charities, the best we can do. But the
10 reality is there's not enough money.

11 So back to the Commissioners in winding up, I
12 think we need to look at not the imagine and all the callers
13 you've got because I could have sat on the phone and called,
14 or I could have done what I did. And I went all over the
15 city to find out really what the problem was on my own, and
16 I talked to some of the workers from out of town and some of
17 the workers in town for Laclede.

18 I'm talking about the grass-roots people, at
19 the bottom, and they told me the reality of the
20 infrastructure, and we don't want to talk about MSV and the
21 problems with our sewer and the rate of MSV. That's another
22 big problem.

23 So they need to regulate that. So I'm just
24 saying we're facing reality, sir and Madam Commissioner,
25 we're facing the realty. Mr. Commissioner, we're facing

1 reality. Don't let the media control your decision to do
2 what it is and the welfare of protecting our property, and
3 we need to do whatever we can to protect our property.

4 We need to do what we can and do it because,
5 if you don't do it, then we're going to be paying for tree
6 trimming and all these other things, and I think I'm about
7 busted on that.

8 I retired last year at a very young age under
9 60, and I had to work part time just to pay for my utility
10 bills and my insurance bills and all these freaking bills,
11 so I know how it is to be in a position like this that many
12 of these people are in. Okay.

13 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Any questions?
14 Questions from the Commissioners?

15 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I don't have any
16 questions.

17 COMMISSIONER GUNN: I don't have any
18 questions.

19 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: All right.

20 MR. TROTTER: Thank you very much, and
21 welcome to the Commission. May you do good for us in St.
22 Louis, because nobody else is going to.

23 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: The next name
24 on the list is Debra Penna-Fredericks. Please raise your
25 right hand.

1 MS. PENNA-FREDERICKS: I also cannot to
2 raise my hand.

3 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Oh, okay.
4 That's fine.

5 (Thereupon, Witness Penna-Fredericks was
6 affirmed by Commissioner Woodruff, and testified
7 as follows:)

8 All right. Could you tell us your name,
9 please.

10 MS. PENNA-FREDERICKS: Debra
11 Penna-Fredericks.

12 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: All right.

13 MS. PENNA-FREDERICKS: Last name is
14 P-E-N-N-A hyphen F-R-E-D-E-R-I-C-K-S.

15 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: And where do
16 you live?

17 MS. PENNA-FREDERICKS: 2019 Princeton
18 Place.

19 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Is that St.
20 Louis?

21 MS. PENNA-FREDERICKS: St. Louis.
22 Well, Richmond Heights. So I live in the county, and by the
23 way, the county doesn't all have those places buried. It
24 just depends where you live.

25 I think I probably have similar things to say

1 to many of the people here, but it is important that you
2 hear a lot of these things because, you know, these are no
3 isolated cases. I think it actually -- I don't know if it's
4 the majority, but maybe it is the average person in America
5 who is struggling.

6 We were talking at our neighborhood watch
7 party this summer when we were gathered around, and there
8 was just a few of us because it was still hot out and most
9 people wouldn't come out of their houses. One of the things
10 that we were talking about though is there were just ten of
11 us out at that particular time. Maybe eight of us, between
12 eight and ten.

13 Two of us, myself and one of the other women,
14 had parents who would not turn on their air-conditioners
15 even that day. I don't know if you remember how hot it was
16 that August day, but it was in the 90s. Right. So most
17 people would not even go to the neighborhood watch party
18 because it was so hot.

19 So you know, that high a percentage, at least
20 20 percent of the people, you know, in this small
21 neighborhood watch party, have parents who would not turn on
22 their air-conditioners. And we were doing everything we
23 could to get them to turn them on, and we couldn't get them
24 to turn them on.

25 And that's -- these are not isolated cases.

1 This is really, really, really, really common and that's at
2 today's rate. People today are very stressed about their
3 utility bills. They're stressed about their grocery bill.
4 They're stressed about every bill out there, and you raise
5 them, even by a dollar, and they're going to stop turning
6 them on when it's 95, 96 or 100. But you raise them by
7 \$8.66 on average, and for many people it's going to be more
8 than that, it's not going to be \$8.66. And we all know
9 that. They're not going to turn them on at all in the
10 summertime, and they're not going to survive.

11 And this is a really serious concern. It's
12 not something we can say well, we'll just lower the amount
13 of money and you can raise them by a little bit less. We
14 really need to seriously consider whether they really have
15 to be raised and why they're going to raise them.

16 And I think this is what I really want to
17 speak to today. You know, when I look at the stock market
18 over the years, one of the things I've noticed is that
19 utilities have been profitable. And it has occurred to me
20 that one of the things we're looking at right now is an
21 issue with having to replace a lot of our lines because they
22 are so old.

23 And I remember during the outages, I was in
24 one of those houses where we had serious outages, you know,
25 in the summer and in the winter. We had an out-of-town

1 person come in the winter, for example, and replace our
2 line. And it wasn't a tree that fell. It just snapped.
3 And he said, I've been out here working and all these lines
4 because we got to -- they got two weeks into it, and he said
5 these are some of the oldest lines I've ever seen.

6 And it occurred to me these have been
7 neglected, and they should have been addressed a long time
8 ago. It's not something that should have happened only when
9 it became a crisis and for the people who are stockholders,
10 the people who have been officers have been earning a lot of
11 money at the expense of those of us who are paying the
12 bills.

13 And to ask us right now to pay extra money
14 when they've been earning all this money, I think is a
15 little unjust. It's not a little unjust. I think it's
16 actually terribly unjust. And I think it's something I'm
17 not feeling like I am terribly willing to do, and I'm
18 certainly not willing to stand by quietly while people are
19 likely to not survive this.

20 And we really are talking about life and death
21 matters. You know, we were told when the Laclede Gas issue
22 raise came along that it was only going to go up a small
23 percentage. I mean, not actually a small. It was actually
24 a fairly large percentage, but they said the average was
25 around 20 percent. I forget the exact numbers they gave us

1 now, but I can tell you what happened to us.

2 We had to replace our furnace and
3 air-conditioner anyway. So we put in these really high
4 energy efficient things, so we have a 95 percent efficient
5 furnace, and we have a 15-year air-conditioner, which is a
6 really high efficiency thing.

7 And our 95 percent -- with our 95 percent
8 efficiency furnace since last year, put in before the winter
9 came, our bills are now equal or higher than the bills we
10 had the year before. And I'm like now, how can this
11 possibly be? They were only supposed to raise it a small
12 amount. So we were using that much less gas.

13 And I'm actually an educated woman. I taught
14 at the university for years. I've had to stop because of
15 illness. I used to be able to do math, and I don't think my
16 math skills are all that poor now, but clearly there's
17 something going on here because, you know, the utility
18 companies, at least this one, has not been as honest as they
19 told us would be. And I really do not want to give license
20 to yet another utility company.

21 I would put on -- want to put on the brakes.
22 We can't afford to do this again. We've got -- we've got to
23 stop this. I'm not ready to pay for this. I think we have
24 to say look there are people earning profits here. Let them
25 take a cut in the profits, and if they want to say well,

1 wait a minute, we don't want to take a cut in profits, we
2 don't want to take a pay cut, I want to look at them and say
3 shame on you.

4 You know, I spent time -- I can't work
5 anymore. What I do in the dead of winter, is I go out and I
6 find homeless people on the street, and I buy gloves and
7 give them to them. And I buy hats, and you know, when you
8 see a homeless man burst into tears because you gave him a
9 pair of gloves and he burst into tears because he is so
10 cold, it is just beyond bearable, and he lost his home
11 because he couldn't afford to live there anymore, and it's
12 because of things like utility bills.

13 I got to tell you, I just think it is beyond
14 shameful that we're even thinking about raising rates right
15 now when there are people earning profits. Stop the profits
16 first, wait until we get to the point where it's going to be
17 a zero profit, and then see if we need to do it. Let's see
18 what we can do with the books first, and if necessary, let's
19 ask the Commission to reconsider whether this should really
20 be a private utility anymore.

21 Maybe we need to take it back to public.
22 Let's find out financially what would happen then. Would we
23 have to raise rates? I would really like to see those
24 numbers. Let's look at how high the homeless rate has gone,
25 and it's continuing to rise because of our economy. We

1 can't afford this with the economy and the prices we have
2 today. How can we possibly consider this. You really,
3 really got to reconsider this.

4 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Any of the
5 Commissioner's got questions of this witness?

6 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: No.

7 COMMISSIONER GUNN: No.

8 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: Any from the
9 parties? Thank you, ma'am.

10 The next name on the list is Charlene Sanders.
11 Am I close? The address is 4950 Cote Brilliant Avenue, if
12 that rings a bell for anybody.

13 All right. They're not here. Okay. Next is
14 Robert Louis Jones. Mr. Jones here? Robert Louis Jones?
15 Okay. They may have left also.

16 That's all the names that I have on the list.
17 Is there anyone else here who would like to testify who
18 hasn't signed on the list yet? All right. I don't see
19 anybody else coming forward.

20 Any final comments from the Commissioners?

21 COMMISSIONER GUNN: I just want to
22 thank everybody for coming out. This is the beginning part
23 of a fairly lengthy process, and it's a very critical one
24 for us. So thank everybody for coming out. You should know
25 that the turnout here has been by far the largest at any of

1 these public hearings, and that means a lot. We do pay
2 attention to that. So we appreciate you taking the time to
3 come out of your -- at night of your busy schedules to come
4 talk to us.

5 I would encourage you to take advantage of the
6 people that are here. There are people from Ameren, Office
7 of Public Counsel, people from the staff of the Public
8 Service Commission. So if you have questions or if you have
9 issues with service or you just want to augment whatever you
10 said or answer some questions, take advantage of these folks
11 because they're here. That's why they're here and they're
12 accessible to do it.

13 But I just want to thank everybody for coming
14 in.

15 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And I would just
16 like to echo that and to also thank all of the support
17 people that are here. It takes a lot of time and energy and
18 coordination to put on these local public hearings. And a
19 lot of people have spent a lot of time doing it and
20 attempting to be here to answer your questions and help you
21 get information.

22 So thank you to all of the people that have
23 come to support this process.

24 COMMISSIONER WOODRUFF: I just want to
25 say that -- to echo what the Commissioners said that there

1 are people here from Ameren that you can talk to, and the
2 very first witness mentioned that she would like to be able
3 to talk to the president of Ameren, and he is in fact here
4 tonight. He's this gray-haired gentleman over here, so you
5 can track him down after the hearing, and I'm sure he'll be
6 glad to talk to you.

7 All right. With that then, we are adjourned.
8 Thanks all very much for coming.

9 (WHEREIN, the hearing was concluded at
10 7:51 p.m.)

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