

**BEFORE
THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO**

In the Matter of the Application to Modify,)	
in Accordance with R.C. 4929.08, the)	
Exemption Granted to The East Ohio Gas)	Case No. 12-1842-GA-EXM
Company d/b/a Dominion East Ohio in Case)	
No. 07-1224-GA-EXM)	

**MOTION FOR LIMITED LATE INTERVENTION
REQUEST FOR PROTECTIVE ORDER
AND REQUEST FOR FIVE DAY EXTENSION TO FILE
REDACTED STAFF INFORMATION
BY SOUTHSTAR ENERGY SERVICES LLC**

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Rule 4901-1-24(D) of the Ohio Administrative Code and the Attorney Examiner's Entry of April 1, 2015, now comes SouthStar Energy Services LLC D/B/A Ohio Natural Gas hereinafter "SouthStar" and respectfully moves the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio ("Commission") for a limited intervention in the matter at bar for the sole purpose of requesting a protective order as to confidential information it has submitted to the Staff and five business days from the issuance of entry to provide the Staff of the Commission and the Attorney Examiner with redacted copies of the confidential information which SouthStar provided the Staff of the Commission which can be made public.

MOTION FOR LIMITED INTERVENTION

SouthStar is a certificated competitive retail natural gas service provider ("CRNGS") who during the period 2013 to the present has provided competitive natural gas service in the Dominion East Ohio (DEO) service area. SouthStar voluntarily provided reports to the Staff of the Commission upon its request concerning the services that it provided in East Ohio service territory

and other Staff requested information. In its January 2013 Opinion and Order the Commission indicated that the Staff would protect the confidential information which the suppliers were voluntarily submitting. Thus, was upheld in the March 2013 Entry on Rehearing. In expectation of that confidential treatment of business sensitive information, all of the reports submitted by SouthStar on the DEO sales program to Staff when submitted were marked “confidential”.

SouthStar is not a party to this proceeding, thus to perfect its request for a protective order, SouthStar now seeks limited intervention for the sole purpose of protecting the confidential and business sensitive information it provided Commission Staff under the assurance that Commission would take the appropriate action to protect the confidential information SouthStar was making available to the Commission Staff.

MOTION FOR PROTECTIVE ORDER

SouthStar is a member of Ohio Gas Marketers Group. The Associations held a conference call meeting on Monday April 7, 2015 to review the Entry. The Associations had worked with the Staff to standardize the information being provided by the participating competitive retail natural gas suppliers since the goal of the collecting the confidential information was for the Staff to aggregate the data for a Staff Report to be prepared sometime in the future.

From a review of SouthStar’s records the confidential reports submitted to the Commission Staff have seven types of confidential and business sensitive information which are protected by the Public Documents Act from public production. The seven types of information which SouthStar seeks protection from: 1) the number and salaries of its full and part time employees; 2) its individual sales and pricing data; 3) the dollar value of capital expenditures made in Ohio; 4) SouthStar’s Ohio Investments; 5) a description of the products SouthStar is offering; 6) the individual product rate codes; and the 7) value added services including promotions being offered.

A more detailed explanation of why these seven types of information are accorded protection is addressed in the attached Memorandum in Support. SouthStar also hereby incorporates the Memorandum of Support in the corresponding motion and memorandum in support filed by the Ohio Gas Marketers Group / Retail Energy Supply Association.

MOTION FOR A FIVE DAY EXTENSION TO FILE REDACTED REPORTS

On April 7, 2015 an Entry was issued in the matter at bar and posted on the Commission website under this docket number requiring that all suppliers who had filed confidential reports with the Staff had (excluding Good Friday) three business days to secure copies of those reports, review the reports, and make the necessary redactions and resubmit the reports back to the Attorney Examiner and the Staff. Since SouthStar was not a party to the proceeding it received no notice other than the information supplied to it by the trade association the first business day following posting. Two business days is simply not a sufficient amount of time to obtain, review and respond. Since SouthStar never received actual notice and responded within two business days of receiving actual notice, it cannot be said that SouthStar has delayed or taken an inordinate amount of time to respond and protect its rights. As a practical matter SouthStar requires five business days to obtain the official copies of the reports it submitted and prepare the proper redactions.

WHEREFORE, SouthStar hereby requests the Commission grant it: 1) limited intervention; 2) a protective order maintaining all the Reports submitted by SouthStar to the Staff of the Commission not be made public at this time; and that SouthStar has five business days from the time of an entry on this matter to submit redacted reports which redact the seven types of protected information listed above.

Respectfully submitted,



M. Howard Petricoff
Gretchen L. Petrucci
Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP
52 E. Gay Street
P.O. Box 1008
Columbus, OH 43216-1008
614-464-5414
mhpetricoff@vorys.com
glpetrucci@vorys.com

Attorneys for SouthStar Energy Services LLC

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF MOTION FOR PROTECTIVE ORDER

Rule 4901-1-24(D), O.A.C., provides for the issuance of an order that is necessary to protect the confidentiality of information contained in documents submitted to the Commission Staff to the extent that state and federal law prohibit the release of such information and where non-disclosure of the information is not inconsistent with the purposes of Title 49 of the Ohio Revised Code. State law recognizes the need to protect information that is confidential in nature, as is the proprietary details contained in the reports which SouthStar provided to the Staff of the Commission for its study (“Study Information”). Section 4929.23(A), R.C., specifically permits the Commission to grant confidentiality to competitive information.¹ Sections 4901.12 and 4905.07, Revised Code, facilitate the protection of trade secrets in the Commission’s possession.² Sections 4901.12 and 4905.07, Revised Code, reference Section 149.43, R.C., and therefore incorporate the provision that exempts from the public record information and records of which the release is prohibited by law.³ State law prohibits the release of information meeting the definition of a trade secret.

The proprietary details contained in the Study Information comprise competitively sensitive and highly proprietary business financial information falling within the statutory

¹ 2 Section 4929.23(A), R.C., provides: “A retail natural gas supplier or governmental aggregator subject to certification under section 4929.20 of the Revised Code shall provide the public utilities commission with such information, regarding a competitive retail natural gas service for which it is subject to certification, as the commission considers necessary to carry out sections 4929.20 to 4929.24 of the Revised Code. The commission shall take such measures as it considers necessary to protect the confidentiality of any such information.”

² 3 Section 4901.12, R.C., provides: “Except as otherwise provided in section 149.43 of the Revised Code and as consistent with the purposes of Title XLIX [49] of the Revised Code, all proceedings of the public utilities commission and all documents and records in its possession are public records. “Section 4905.07, R.C., provides: “Except as provided in section 149.43 of the Revised Code and as consistent with the purposes of Title XLIX [49] of the Revised Code, all facts and information in the possession of the public utilities commission shall be public, and all reports, records, files, books, accounts, papers, and memorandums of every nature in its possession shall be open to inspection by interested parties or their attorneys.”

³ 4 Section 149.43(A)(1)(v), R.C., provides in part: “‘Public record’ does not mean records the release of which is prohibited by state or federal law.”

characterization of a trade secret as defined by Section 1333.61(D), R.C. The definition of trade secret contained in Section 1333.61(D), R.C., is as follows:

"Trade secret" means information, including the whole or any portion or phase of any scientific or technical information, design, process, procedure, formula, pattern, compilation, program, device, method, technique, or improvement, or any business information or plans, financial information, or listing of names, addresses, or telephone numbers, that satisfies both of the following:

(1) It derives independent economic value, actual or potential, from not being generally known to, and not being readily ascertainable by proper means by, other persons who can obtain economic value from its disclosure or use.

(2) It is the subject of efforts that are reasonable under the circumstances to maintain its secrecy.

Section 1333.61(D), R.C. (emphasis added). In State ex rel The Plain Dealer the Ohio Dept. of Ins. (1997), 80 Ohio St. 3d 513, the Ohio Supreme Court adopted a six factor test to analyze whether information is a trade secret under the statute:

(1) The extent to which the information is known outside the business, (2) the extent to which it is known to those inside the business, i.e., by the employees, (3) the precautions taken by the holder of the trade secret to guard the secrecy of the information, (4) the savings effected and the value to the holder in having the information as against competitors, (5) the amount of effort or money expended in obtaining and developing the information, and (6) the amount of time and expense it would take for others to acquire and duplicate the information.

Id. at 524-525 (quoting Pyromatics, Inc. v. Petruziello, 7 Ohio App. 3d 131, 134-135 (Cuyahoga County 1983)).

After applying these six factors to the information sought to be protected, it is clear that the proprietary details in the Study Information contain proprietary data and are confidential as trade secrets. The proprietary details in the seven types of information for which protection is requested are information and contain technical information regarding: 1) the number and salaries of its full and part time employees; 2) its individual sales and pricing data; 3) the dollar value of capital

expenditures made in Ohio; 4) SouthStar's Ohio Investments; 5) a description of the products SouthStar is offering; 6) the individual product rate codes; and the 7) value added services including promotions being offered.

The Study Information when they were submitted to the Commission Staff was intended from the start to be confidential and all the reports were marked "confidential". So there is no question of intent by SouthStar to keep the information confidential. The proprietary details for which protection is sought are not generally known in the market and are not readily ascertainable by other means.

Courts in other jurisdictions have also held that not only does a public utilities commission have the authority to protect the trade secrets of the companies subject to its jurisdiction; the trade secrets statute creates a duty to protect the information which is the subject of this motion. New York Tel. Co. v. Pub. Serv. Comm. N.Y., 56 N.Y. 2d 213 (1982). Indeed, for the Commission to do otherwise would be to negate the protections the Ohio General Assembly has granted to all businesses through the Uniform Trade Secrets Act, including public utilities, and now SouthStar who provides competitive retail natural gas service. This Commission previously carried out its obligations in this regard in numerous proceedings, including litigated cases and licensure dockets. Granting SouthStar's Motion would be consistent with this precedent and continue the solid public policy embraced by the Commission's precedent in the past protecting proprietary and confidential information.

All of the Study Information which is subject to this motion – the spreadsheets from DEO that show the individual CRNGS suppliers' revenue month billing; residential, non-residential and total customer counts, Mcf volumes, commodity amounts, the average rate billed, the submitted rate information, and the data collected from SouthStar which includes the supplier name, quarter

ending date, rate code, product description, value-added services, the number of full time and part time employees, the value of capital expenditures expressed in dollars and any other Ohio investment – constitutes trade secret information and should not be disclosed. However, if any part of this information should be released, the Commission should ensure any details released would not permit OPAE (or anyone else this information is released to as part of a public records request) to piece together the information released by SouthStar in combination with that of information released that was provided by DEO to allow the recipient to piece together trade secret information of SouthStar. Further to this point, the recipient of the information should make no difference as to the Commission's consideration, as the Commission cedes control of the information after release in the public domain and would therefore be available to anybody, including SouthStar's competitors.

In summary, the Commission should find that all use of the seven types of information submitted in the Study Information constitutes a trade secret and should be exempted from any public information provided in response to the OPAE request. Further, that SouthStar should be given five business days to present redacted versions of the Study Information which can be made public.

Respectfully submitted,



M. Howard Petricoff
Gretchen L. Petrucci
Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP
52 E. Gay Street
Columbus, OH 43215
614-464-5414
mhpetricoff@vorys.com
glpetrucci@vorys.com

Attorneys for SouthStar Energy Services LLC

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that a copy of the foregoing document was served by electronic mail on the following persons this 8th day of April, 2015:



M. Howard Petricoff

stephen.reilly@puc.state.oh.us
devin.parram@puc.state.oh.us
serio@occ.state.oh.us
sauer@occ.state.oh.us
BarthRoyer@aol.com
cmooney2@columbus.rr.com
sam@mwncmh.com
joliker@mwncmh.com
fdarr@mwncmh.com
cgoodman@energymarketers.com
tobrien@bricker.com
whitt@whitt-sturtevant.com
joseph.clark@directenergy.com
Campbell@whitt-sturtevant.com
drinebolt@aol.com
Williams@whitt-sturtevant.com

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Case No(s). 12-1842-GA-EXM

Summary: Motion Motion for Limited Late Intervention, Request for Protective Order and Request for Five Day Extension to File Redacted Staff Information electronically filed by M HOWARD PETRICOFF on behalf of SouthStar Energy Services LLC D/B/A Ohio Natural Gas