

**THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPLAINT OF  
SARA MILKO,**

**COMPLAINANT,**

**v.**

**CASE NO. 18-1547-GA-CSS**

**COLUMBIA GAS OF OHIO, INC.,**

**RESPONDENT.**

**ENTRY**

Entered in the Journal on November 14, 2018

{¶ 1} Pursuant to R.C. 4905.26, the Commission has authority to consider written complaints filed against a public utility by any person or corporation regarding any rate, service, regulation, or practice relating to any service furnished by the public utility that is in any respect unjust, unreasonable, insufficient, or unjustly discriminatory.

{¶ 2} Columbia Gas of Ohio, Inc. (Columbia) is a natural gas company as defined in R.C. 4905.03 and a public utility as defined in R.C. 4905.02, and, as such, is subject to the jurisdiction of this Commission.

{¶ 3} On October 12, 2018, Sara Milko (Complainant) filed a complaint against Columbia, alleging that NPL Construction Company (NPL), Columbia's contractor, had incorrectly installed a smart meter and the associated gas lines at her home in October 2014. Complainant contends that the incorrect installation caused a gas leak, and also caused two dryers to stop working, necessitating the purchase of another dryer in June 2018. According to Complainant, the gas leak was undetected for almost four years, posing a danger to Complainant and her family. Complainant requests a settlement that takes into consideration the broken dryers and other physical and emotional damage, as well as the danger allegedly caused by Columbia and NPL. Complainant adds that NPL has already denied her claim.

{¶ 4} Columbia filed its answer on October 31, 2018, stating that it is without sufficient knowledge to admit or deny Complainant's allegations. Columbia also raises several affirmative defenses.

{¶ 5} The attorney examiner finds that this matter should be scheduled for a settlement conference. The purpose of the settlement conference will be to explore the parties' willingness to negotiate a resolution in lieu of an evidentiary hearing. In accordance with Ohio Adm.Code 4901-1-26, any statements made in an attempt to settle this matter without the need for an evidentiary hearing will not generally be admissible to prove liability or invalidity of a claim. An attorney examiner from the Commission's legal department will facilitate the settlement process. However, nothing prohibits any party from initiating settlement negotiations prior to the scheduled settlement conference.

{¶ 6} The settlement conference shall be scheduled for November 29, 2018, at 1:00 p.m. at the Commission offices, 180 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793. All parties should register at the lobby desk and then proceed to the 11th floor in order to participate in the settlement conference. The parties should bring all documents relevant to this matter. If a settlement is not reached at the conference, the attorney examiner will conduct a discussion of procedural issues. Procedural issues for discussion may include discovery dates, possible stipulations of facts, and potential hearing dates.

{¶ 7} Pursuant to Ohio Adm.Code 4901-1-26(F), the representatives of the public utility shall investigate the issues raised in the complaint prior to the settlement conference, and all parties attending the conference shall be prepared to discuss settlement of the issues raised and shall have the authority to settle those issues.

{¶ 8} As is the case in all Commission complaint proceedings, the complainant has the burden of proving the allegations of the complaint. *Grossman v. Pub. Util. Comm.*, 5 Ohio St.2d 189, 214 N.E.2d 666 (1966).

{¶ 9} It is, therefore,

{¶ 10} ORDERED, That a settlement conference be scheduled for November 29, 2018, at 1:00 p.m. at the Commission offices, 180 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793. It is, further,

{¶ 11} ORDERED, That a copy of this Entry be served upon all parties of record.

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

/s/James M. Lynn

By: James M. Lynn  
Attorney Examiner

JRJ/hac

**This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities**

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**Case No(s). 18-1547-GA-CSS**

Summary: Attorney Examiner Entry scheduling a settlement conference electronically filed by Heather A Chilcote on behalf of James M. Lynn, Attorney Examiner, Public Utilities Commission