

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

IN THE MATTER OF THE INVESTIGATION
OF THE EAST OHIO GAS COMPANY D/B/A
DOMINION ENERGY OHIO RELATIVE TO
ITS COMPLIANCE WITH THE NATURAL
GAS PIPELINE SAFETY STANDARDS AND
RELATED MATTERS.

CASE NO. 19-2140-GA-GPS

ENTRY

Entered in the Journal on December 18, 2019

I. SUMMARY

{¶ 1} The Commission directs Staff to formally investigate The East Ohio Gas Company d/b/a Dominion Energy Ohio relative to its compliance with the gas pipeline safety rules with respect to the gas incident that occurred on November 15, 2019, in Pepper Pike, Ohio, and file a report of its findings in this docket.

II. DISCUSSION

{¶ 2} The East Ohio Gas Company d/b/a Dominion Energy Ohio (DEO) is a natural gas company as defined in R.C. 4905.03 and a public utility within the meaning of R.C. 4905.02. DEO is also an operator, as defined in R.C. 4905.90. As such, DEO is subject to the ongoing jurisdiction and supervision of the Commission, pursuant to R.C. 4905.04, 4905.05, 4905.06, and 4905.90 through 4905.96. Accordingly, DEO is required to comply with the minimum gas service standards found in Ohio Adm.Code Chapter 4901:1-13, as well as the gas pipeline safety (GPS) rules contained in Ohio Adm.Code Chapter 4901:1-1-16, which set forth the safety standards and requirements for intrastate gas pipeline facilities subject to the Commission's jurisdiction. Pursuant to Ohio Adm.Code 4901:1-16-03(A), the Commission has also adopted the GPS regulations of the United States Department of Transportation contained in 49 C.F.R. Parts 40, 191, 192, and 199.

{¶ 3} R.C. 4905.91 provides that the Commission may investigate any service, act, practice, policy, or omission by an operator to determine its compliance with R.C. 4905.90 through 4905.96 and the pipeline safety code.

{¶ 4} Ohio Adm.Code 4901:1-16-12 provides that the Commission may initiate a GPS proceeding after, among other things, an incident has occurred and that, unless otherwise ordered, Staff shall file with the Commission and serve upon the operator a written report of investigation within 90 days after service of the entry that initiates the proceeding.

{¶ 5} On December 12, 2019, Staff filed a letter detailing its initial investigation into DEO's compliance with the GPS rules following an incident that occurred on November 15, 2019, at 28000 Shaker Boulevard, Pepper Pike, Ohio in Cuyahoga County. In its letter, Staff states that a recently installed, 30-inch steel distribution main operating at approximately 193 pounds per square inch gauge failed and released natural gas into the atmosphere, which subsequently ignited. Staff indicates that the section that failed was bored under the roadway at a depth of 15-25 feet and had been in service for approximately two weeks. Upon notification, Staff responded to the scene to conduct an investigation and discovered that a girth weld failure caused the rupture. Staff represents that further investigation of the incident revealed that several potential violations of the GPS rules contributed to the incident. As a result of the pipeline failure and the severity of the potential GPS violations, Staff requests that the Commission open a formal investigation to determine the cause of the incident. Staff represents that it intends to file a report of its findings at the conclusion of its investigation.

{¶ 6} The Commission believes that further investigation of possible pipeline safety violations and a staff report is warranted. Accordingly, the Commission's Service Monitoring and Enforcement Department shall:

- (a) Conduct a formal investigation into DEO's compliance with Ohio Adm.Code Chapter 4901:1-16, and
- (b) File a GPS investigative report within 90 days of the date of this Entry, consistent with Ohio Adm.Code 4901:1-16-12.

{¶ 7} Additionally, the Commission directs DEO to respond in writing to the staff investigative report within 30 days of its filing. After the staff report and DEO's written response are filed, the Commission will determine how to further proceed in this matter, including an evidentiary hearing if necessary.

III. ORDER

{¶ 8} It is, therefore,

{¶ 9} ORDERED, That the Commission's Service Monitoring and Enforcement Department conduct a formal investigation into DEO's compliance with the Commission's GPS rules with respect to the incident detailed in Paragraph 5. It is, further,

{¶ 10} ORDERED, That the Commission's Service Monitoring and Enforcement Department file an investigative report within 90 days of the date of this Entry and serve a copy of that report upon DEO and all other interested persons and parties of record. It is, further,

{¶ 11} ORDERED, That DEO shall, within 30 days of the filing of the GPS staff report, file a written response to that report. It is, further,

{¶ 12} ORDERED, That a copy of this Entry be served upon DEO and all other interested persons and parties of record.

COMMISSIONERS:

Approving:

Sam Randazzo, Chairman
M. Beth Trombold
Lawrence K. Friedeman
Daniel R. Conway
Dennis P. Deters

LLA/hac

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