

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF
THE EAST OHIO GAS COMPANY D/B/A
DOMINION ENERGY OHIO FOR
APPROVAL OF TARIFFS TO ADJUST ITS
AUTOMATED METER READING COST
RECOVERY CHARGE TO RECOVER COSTS
INCURRED IN 2019.

CASE NO. 19-1945-GA-RDR

FINDING AND ORDER

Entered in the Journal on April 8, 2020

I. SUMMARY

{¶ 1} The Commission approves the application of The East Ohio Gas Company d/b/a Dominion Energy Ohio to adjust its automated meter reading cost recovery charge.

II. DISCUSSION

{¶ 2} The East Ohio Gas Company d/b/a Dominion Energy Ohio (DEO or Company) 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} R.C. 4929.11 provides that the Commission may allow any automatic adjustment mechanism or device in a natural gas company's rate schedules that allows a natural gas company's rates or charges for a regulated service or goods to fluctuate automatically in accordance with changes in a specified cost or costs.

{¶ 4} On October 15, 2008, the Commission approved a stipulation that, in part, provided that the accumulation by DEO of costs for the installation of automated meter reading (AMR) technology may be recovered through a separate charge (AMR cost recovery charge). The AMR cost recovery charge was initially set at \$0.00. The Commission's Opinion and Order contemplated periodic filings of applications and adjustments for the AMR cost recovery charge. *In re The East Ohio Gas Co. d/b/a Dominion East Ohio*, Case No. 07-829-GA-AIR, et al. (*Distribution Rate Case*), Opinion and Order (Oct. 15, 2008).

{¶ 5} By Finding and Order issued April 24, 2019, in *In re The East Ohio Gas Company d/b/a Dominion Energy Ohio*, Case No. 18-1588-GA-RDR, the Commission approved DEO's current AMR cost recovery charge, thereby allowing DEO to recover costs incurred during 2018.

{¶ 6} On November 26, 2019, DEO filed its prefilng notice in the above-captioned case.

{¶ 7} On December 19, 2019, the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) filed a motion to intervene pursuant to R.C. 4903.221. No memorandum contra was filed.

{¶ 8} On February 26, 2020, DEO filed its application requesting an adjustment to its current AMR cost recovery charge, in accordance with the procedure approved in the *Distribution Rate Case*, for costs incurred during the calendar year 2019. Along with its application, DEO also filed the direct testimony of Lori S. Parker.

{¶ 9} In its application, DEO requests that the Commission approve an adjustment to the Company's AMR cost recovery charge, as follows:

Current Rate	Proposed Rate	Proposed Decrease
\$0.25 per month	\$0.02 per month	\$0.23 per month

{¶ 10} In her testimony, Ms. Parker affirms that DEO calculated the AMR cost recovery charge in a manner consistent with the revenue requirement calculation in the last rate case, and provided detailed discussion as to how such calculations were made in the instant case (DEO App., Attach. C at 2-9). Ms. Parker indicates that the calculation takes into account the federal income tax rate reduction pursuant to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (TCJA). Ms. Parker offers that, in 2019, DEO achieved \$6,788,413.96 in meter-reading operations and maintenance (O&M) expense savings for its customers, compared to that expense for the 2007 baseline year. However, she noted that DEO did not experience call-center savings in 2019. (DEO App., Attach. C at 7-8; Schedule 11.)

{¶ 11} By Entry issued March 6, 2020, the attorney examiner set a March 23, 2020 deadline for filing motions to intervene. The attorney examiner also required that Staff and intervenor comments on the application be filed by March 23, 2020, and that DEO file, by March 27, 2020, a statement informing the Commission whether all issues raised in the comments had been resolved. Finally, the attorney examiner also granted OCC's motion for intervention.

{¶ 12} Staff filed comments on DEO's application on March 23, 2020. No other comments were filed.

{¶ 13} In its comments, Staff states it reviewed the Company's application, schedules, testimony, and related documentation and confirmed that DEO properly applied the depreciation rates adopted in Case No. 19-1639-GA-AAM. With regard to TCJA impacts, Staff has reviewed the Company's schedules to confirm that normalized and non-normalized excess deferred income taxes (EDIT), including EDIT associated with post-in-service carrying costs, are being refunded to customers in accordance with the Commission's Finding and Order in the previous year's Rider AMR filing. Staff concludes that it has no objections to DEO's application and supporting documentation and recommends approval.

{¶ 14} On March 27, 2020, DEO filed its statement to inform the Commission whether the issues raised in the comments have been resolved. DEO indicates that Staff recommended approval of DEO's application and thus believes that there are no issues to resolve. Therefore, DEO respectfully requests that the Commission approve its February 26, 2020 application, as filed.

{¶ 15} Upon consideration of the application and comments filed by Staff, the Commission finds that DEO's application to adjust its AMR cost recovery charge to \$0.02 per customer per month is reasonable and should be approved.

III. ORDER

{¶ 16} It is, therefore,

{¶ 17} ORDERED, That DEO's application to adjust its AMR cost recovery charge is approved. It is, further,

{¶ 18} ORDERED, That DEO is authorized to file tariffs, in final form, consistent with this Finding and Order. DEO shall file one copy in this case docket and one copy in its TRF docket. It is, further,

{¶ 19} ORDERED, That the effective date of the new tariffs shall be a date not earlier than the date upon which the final tariff pages are filed with the Commission. It is, further,

{¶ 20} ORDERED, That DEO notify its customers of the changes to the tariffs via bill message or bill insert within 30 days of the effective date of the revised tariffs. A copy of the customer notice shall be submitted to the Commission's Service Monitoring and Enforcement Department, Reliability and Service Analysis Division at least ten days prior to its distribution to customers. It is, further,

{¶ 21} ORDERED, That nothing in this Finding and Order shall be binding upon the Commission in any future proceeding or investigation involving the justness or reasonableness of any rate, charge, rule, or regulation. It is, further,

{¶ 22} ORDERED, That a copy of this Finding and Order be served upon each party of record.

COMMISSIONERS:

Approving:

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

AS/kck

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Case No(s). 19-1945-GA-RDR

Summary: Finding & Order approving the application of The East Ohio Gas Company d/b/a Dominion Energy Ohio to adjust its automated meter reading cost recovery charge.
electronically filed by Ms. Mary E Fischer on behalf of Public Utilities Commission of Ohio