

## THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF  
SUBURBAN NATURAL GAS COMPANY TO  
SUSPEND OR MODIFY CERTAIN  
PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES DURING  
THE COVID-19 STATE OF EMERGENCY  
AND RELATED MATTERS.

CASE NO. 20-664-GA-UNC

### ENTRY

Entered in the Journal on May 14, 2020

{¶ 1} Suburban Natural Gas Company (Suburban) is a natural gas company and a public utility as defined by R.C. 4905.03 and R.C. 4905.02, respectively. As such, Suburban is subject to the jurisdiction of this Commission.

{¶ 2} R.C. 4909.16 provides, in part, that, in the event of an emergency, when the Commission finds it necessary to prevent injury to the business or interests of the public or of any public utility, it may temporarily alter, amend, or suspend any existing rates or schedules.

{¶ 3} On March 9, 2020, the governor signed Executive Order 2020-01D (Executive Order), declaring a state of emergency in Ohio to protect the well-being of Ohioans from the dangerous effects of COVID-19. As described in the Executive Order, state agencies are required to implement procedures consistent with recommendations from the Department of Health to prevent or alleviate the public health threat associated with COVID-19. Additionally, all citizens are urged to heed the advice of the Department of Health regarding this public health emergency in order to protect their health and safety. The Executive Order was effective immediately and will remain in effect until the COVID-19 emergency no longer exists. The Department of Health is making COVID-19 information, including information on preventative measures, available via the internet at [coronavirus.ohio.gov/](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/).

{¶ 4} Pursuant to R.C. 3701.13, the Ohio Department of Health has supervision of “all matters relating to the preservation of the life and health of the people” and the “ultimate authority in matters of quarantine and isolation.” On March 12, 2020, the Director

of the Ohio Department of Health issued an Order indicating that “all persons are urged to maintain social distancing (approximately six feet away from other people) whenever possible.”

{¶ 5} On March 12, 2020, the Commission opened Case No. 20-591-AU-UNC and directed all utility companies in this state to review their disconnection policies and procedures in light of the state of emergency. *In re the Proper Procedures and Process for the Commission’s Operations and Proceedings During the Declared State of Emergency and Related Matters*, Case No. 20-591-AU-UNC (*Emergency Case*), Entry (Mar. 12, 2020) at ¶ 7. On March 13, 2020, the Commission extended its winter reconnection order through May 1, 2020, and directed all utility companies in this state to review their reconnection procedures. *Emergency Case*, Entry (Mar. 13, 2020) at ¶ 6. In the March 12, 2020, and March 13, 2020 Entries, the Commission also directed all utility companies to promptly seek any necessary approval, for the duration of the emergency, to suspend otherwise applicable disconnection or reconnection requirements that may impose a service continuity or service restoration hardship on residential and non-residential customers or create unnecessary COVID-19 risks associated with social contact. The Commission determined that such filings shall be deemed approved on an emergency basis for a period of at least 30 days effective as of the filing date or until such date as the Commission may otherwise specify, which shall not be less than 30 days.

{¶ 6} On March 30, 2020, Suburban filed an application for authority to suspend and modify various policies and practices and for waivers of related Commission rules due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Suburban maintains it has taken appropriate operational measures to suspend all denials or disconnections for residential and non-residential services to ensure continuity of service, effective March 12, 2020. It also seeks to modify or suspend disconnection notices for customers for the duration of the emergency period. While Suburban intends to restore service to customers who were disconnected for non-payment within the last 30 days from the Commission’s first Entry in the *Emergency Case*, Suburban requests that the Commission allow it to require customers who are experiencing

symptoms of COVID-19 or who have tested positive for COVID-19 to isolate from Suburban employees to minimize the risk of social contact. Next, Suburban requests a waiver of time requirements related to service installation pursuant to the Commission's rules and Suburban's policies, practices, and tariff provisions during the pandemic. With regard to meter reads, testing, and related matters, Suburban requests the Commission's approval to suspend or modify applicable requirements that may impose a service continuity hardship or create unnecessary risks of social contact. Further, Suburban seeks Commission approval for suspension of any practices that involve door-to-door and in-person marketing activities. Finally, Suburban requests that the Commission's waivers generally encompass the consequential impact on the natural gas business and include necessary extensions for applicable deadlines that may be delayed as a result of the emergency. Suburban submits it will utilize best efforts to meet all applicable deadlines.

{¶ 7} On April 13, 2020, the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel filed a motion to intervene. Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy also filed a motion to intervene on April 14, 2020.

{¶ 8} On May 12, 2020, Staff filed its review and recommendations in response to Suburban's application.

{¶ 9} In order to assist the Commission in its review of Suburban's application, the attorney examiner finds that motions for intervention and comments should be filed by no later than May 21, 2020.

{¶ 10} It is, therefore,

{¶ 11} ORDERED, That the procedural schedule set forth in Paragraph 9 be adopted. It is, further,

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

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

*/s/ Anna Sanyal*

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By: Anna Sanyal  
Attorney Examiner

SJP/kck

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

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**Case No(s). 20-0664-GA-UNC**

Summary: Attorney Examiner Entry motions for intervention and comments should be filed by no later than 5.21.20. electronically filed by Kelli C King on behalf of Anna Sanyal, Attorney Examiner, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio