

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

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In the Matter of the :  
Regulation of the Purchased : Case No. 14-0206-GA-GCR  
Gas Adjustment Clauses : Case No. 14-0209-GA-GCR  
Contained within the Rate : Case No. 14-0212-GA-GCR  
Schedules of Brainard Gas :  
Corporation, Northeast Ohio :  
Natural Gas Corporation, :  
and Orwell Natural Gas :  
Company and Related Matters.:

In the Matter of the :  
Uncollectible Expense Riders: Case No. 14-0309-GA-UEX  
of Northeast Ohio Natural : Case No. 14-0312-GA-UEX  
Gas Corporation and Orwell :  
Natural Gas Company. :

In the Matter of the :  
Percentage of Income Payment: Case No. 14-0409-GA-PIP  
Plan Rider of Northeast :  
Ohio Gas Corporation. :

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PROCEEDINGS

before Scott Farkas, Attorney Examiner, at the Public  
Utilities Commission of Ohio, 180 East Broad Street,  
Room 11-D, Columbus, Ohio, called at 10:00 a.m. on  
Tuesday, July 28, 2015.

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ARMSTRONG & OKEY, INC.  
222 East Town Street, Second Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-5201  
(614) 224-9481 - (800) 223-9481

Fax - (614) 224-5724

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APPEARANCES:

Taft, Stettinius & Hollister, LLP  
By Mr. Mark S. Yurick  
Mr. Devin D. Parram  
65 East State Street, Suite 1000  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-4213

On behalf of the Companies.

Bruce J. Weston, Ohio Consumers' Counsel  
By Mr. Joseph P. Serio  
Ms. Maureen R. Grady  
10 West Broad Street, Suite 1800  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

On behalf of the Residential  
Consumers of Brainard Gas Corporation,  
Northeast Ohio Natural Gas Corporation,  
and Orwell Natural Gas Company.

Mike DeWine, Ohio Attorney General  
William L. Wright, Section Chief  
Public Utilities Section  
By Mr. Werner L. Margard III  
Mr. Thomas G. Lindgren  
Ms. Katherine L. Johnson  
180 East Broad Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793

On behalf of the Staff of the Public  
Utilities Commission.

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EXHIBITS

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1 - Prefiled Testimony of Gregory Slone	20	not admitted

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1 Tuesday Morning Session,  
2 July 28, 2015.

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4 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: The Commission  
5 has called for hearing at this time and place  
6 Regulation of the Purchased Gas Adjustment Clauses  
7 contained within the Rate Schedules of Brainard Gas  
8 Corporation, Northeast Ohio Natural Gas Corporation,  
9 and Orwell Natural Gas Company and Related Matters.  
10 Case Nos. 14-0206-GA-GCR, 14-0209-GA-GCR,  
11 14-0212-GA-GCR; also In the Matter of the  
12 Uncollectible Expense Riders of Northeast Ohio  
13 Natural Gas Corporation and Orwell Natural Gas  
14 Company, Case Nos. 14-0309-GA-UEx, 14-0312-GA-UEx;  
15 and In the Matter of the Percentage of Income Payment  
16 Plan Rider of Northeast Ohio Gas Corporation, Case  
17 No. 14-0409-GA-PIP.

18 My name is Scott Farkas. I am the  
19 attorney-examiner assigned to hear these cases. I  
20 will take appearances. First, on behalf of the  
21 companies.

22 MR. YURICK: On behalf of the companies,  
23 your Honor, my name is Mark Yurick. I'm with the law  
24 firm of Taft Stettinius & Hollister, which is 65 East  
25 State Street, Suite 1000, Columbus, Ohio 43215.

1 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: On behalf of  
2 staff.

3 MR. MARGARD: Thank you, your Honor. On  
4 behalf of the staff of the Public Utilities  
5 Commission of Ohio, Mike DeWine, Ohio Attorney  
6 General, William L. Wright, Section Chief, Public  
7 Utilities Section, by Assistant Attorneys General  
8 Werner L. Margard, Thomas G. Lindgren, Katherine L.  
9 Johnson, 180 East Broad Street, Fifth Floor,  
10 Columbus, Ohio.

11 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Thank you.

12 MR. SERIO: Thank you. On behalf of the  
13 residential utility customers of Brainard, Northeast  
14 and Orwell, Bruce Weston, Consumers' Counsel, by  
15 Joseph P. Serio.

16 MR. MARGARD: Your Honor, as a  
17 preliminary matter, as the Bench is aware, by  
18 Commission rule audit reports ordered by the  
19 Commission to be performed by the staff and filed in  
20 the proceedings are deemed admitted into evidence in  
21 the record. Consequently, I would like to mark for  
22 purposes of identification for the record the four  
23 audit reports filed in these cases.

24 Specifically I would like to mark as  
25 Commission-Ordered Exhibit No. 1 the Financial Audit

1 of the Gas Recovery Mechanisms for the Effective GCR  
2 periods of Brainard Natural Gas Company, Northeast  
3 Ohio Natural Gas Corporation, and Orwell Natural Gas  
4 Company filed in Case Nos. 14-206, 14-209, and  
5 14-212, respectively, on January 27, 2015.

6 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: So marked.

7 MR. MARGARD: As Commission-Ordered  
8 Exhibit No. 2 the Audit of the Uncollectible Expense  
9 Mechanisms for the period January 2012 to  
10 December 2013 for Northeast Ohio Natural Gas  
11 Corporation filed in Case No. 14-309 on January 22,  
12 2015.

13 As Commission-Ordered Exhibit No. 3,  
14 the Audit of the Uncollectible Expense Mechanisms  
15 for the period January 2012 through December 2013 for  
16 the Orwell Natural Gas Company filed in Case  
17 No. 14-312 on January 22, 2015.

18 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: So marked.

19 MR. MARGARD: And, finally, as  
20 Commission-Ordered Exhibit No. 4, the Audit of the  
21 Percentage of Income Payment Plan for the period  
22 January 2012 through December 2013 for the Northeast  
23 Ohio Natural Gas Corporation filed in Case No. 14-409  
24 on January 22, 2015.

25 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Okay. I'll just

1 note for the record our Rule 4901-1-28 does provide  
2 that audit reports, reports of investigation  
3 performed by staff are deemed admitted into the  
4 record as evidence at this time. Thank you.

5 (EXHIBITS ADMITTED INTO EVIDENCE.)

6 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: At this time it's  
7 my understanding there is an Amended Stipulation. I  
8 believe there was a Stipulation earlier filed and now  
9 that's an Amended Stipulation. Is that accurate?

10 MR. YURICK: That's accurate, your Honor.  
11 That stipulation was filed I believe on Friday.

12 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Okay. And for  
13 the record, does the Amended Stipulation supersede  
14 the Stipulation that was originally filed?

15 MR. YURICK: Yes, it does.

16 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: And, for the  
17 record, the staff and the companies are the only two  
18 signatory parties; is that correct?

19 MR. YURICK: That's correct, your Honor.

20 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Mr. Serio, what's  
21 the OCC's position on the Amended Stipulation?

22 MR. SERIO: I have a statement I would  
23 like to read, your Honor.

24 The Ohio Consumers' Counsel thanks the  
25 PUCO staff and the three utilities for continuing to



1 negotiate with us on these issues affecting  
2 consumers, even after those parties had filed an  
3 initial settlement among themselves on July 14, 2015.

4 The further negotiations resulted in a  
5 second settlement, the amended settlement, filed on  
6 July 24, 2015. The testimony of Greg Slone that we  
7 filed on July 23, 2015, describes the reasons the  
8 Consumers' Counsel opposed the first settlement.

9 Given the improvements in the outcomes  
10 for consumers in the amended settlement, the  
11 negotiations have resulted in the Consumers'  
12 Counsels' updated position not to oppose it. Those  
13 outcomes include increased refunds for consumers  
14 regarding the bills they paid for natural gas and a  
15 future independent management audit

16 To be clear, what we do not oppose is the  
17 amended settlement as it is filed for adoption by the  
18 PUCO. Again, we appreciate the efforts of the  
19 parties in these challenging negotiations.

20 Thank you.

21 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Thank you.

22 You may proceed.

23 MR. YURICK: Thank you, your Honor. To  
24 support the Stipulation the companies would call  
25 Martin Whelan to the stand.

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THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Okay.

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MARTIN K. WHELAN

being first duly sworn, as prescribed by law, was examined and testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

By Mr. Yurick:

Q. Sir, would you please state your full name and spell your last name for the record.

A. Martin K. Whelan, W-H-E-L-A-N.

Q. And, sir, how are you currently employed?

A. I'm the president of three Ohio utilities, Northeast Ohio Natural Gas, Orwell Natural Gas, and Brainard Natural Gas.

Q. And how long have you been employed in that capacity for the company?

A. Since March of 2014.

Q. Did you work for the companies or related companies prior to that?

A. I worked for Orwell Natural Gas from 2002 to 2004; from 2004 to 2014 I was the vice president, chief operating officer of Northeast Ohio Natural Gas; from 2011 to current I'm the president of Spellman Pipeline.

Q. Sir, in connection with your position as

1 president of Orwell, Brainard, and Northeast Ohio  
2 Natural Gas, have you personally been involved in  
3 negotiations that ultimately resulted in the  
4 execution of an Amended Stipulation in this case  
5 filed here on July 24, 2015?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And did you submit written testimony in  
8 support of an original stipulation in this case?

9 A. Yes.

10 MR. YURICK: May I approach, your Honor?

11 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Yes.

12 Q. So, sir, handing you what has been marked  
13 Companies Exhibit A, is that a true and accurate copy  
14 of your prefiled written testimony in this case?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And was that testimony drafted by you or  
17 at your direction?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And, again, that testimony refers to an  
20 original non-Amended Stipulation that was filed in  
21 this case on July 14, correct?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. But if I asked you the questions set  
24 forth in your prefiled testimony here today, would  
25 your answers be the same and would your testimony be

1 the same as it relates to the Amended Stipulation?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Handing you what has been marked Joint  
4 Exhibit 1, is that a true and accurate copy of the  
5 Amended Stipulation filed in this case?

6 A. Yes.

7 MR. YURICK: Your Honor, at this point  
8 the companies would hereby move the admission of  
9 Joint Exhibit 1 and Companies Exhibit A into the  
10 record, and we will proffer Mr. Whelan for  
11 cross-examination.

12 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Thank you.

13 Does the staff have any questions of this  
14 witness?

15 MR. MARGARD: I do not. Thank you, your  
16 Honor.

17 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Does OCC have any  
18 questions?

19 MR. SERIO: No questions.

20 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: As there has been  
21 no cross, there will be no redirect, obviously.

22 I do have questions for the witness about  
23 the Stipulation, just for clarification purposes.

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## EXAMINATION

1  
2 By The Attorney Examiner:

3 Q. If you turn to page 2 of the Stipulation,  
4 in the second full paragraph it begins, "Except for  
5 enforcement purposes, neither this Stipulation and  
6 Recommendation nor information and data contained,"  
7 and then it goes on. What does that mean "Except for  
8 enforcement purposes"? What does that refer to?

9 A. My understanding of it is they didn't  
10 want to cross into the other open cases.

11 Q. It didn't what?

12 A. There are open cases in front of the  
13 Commission.

14 Q. Okay. If you turn to page 3, under B,  
15 Gas Cost Recovery, Financial Audit, No. 2, it says,  
16 "The Signatory Parties agree that Brainard filed an  
17 updated Lake Erie College transportation contract  
18 with the Commission... on October 27."

19 Is that statement in there just to  
20 reference the recommendation of the staff that was  
21 made with regard to that contract?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. And aren't there other Brainard  
24 contracts that are also outstanding or have been  
25 filed?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Why weren't the other contracts  
3 referenced?

4 A. I think this one was referenced in the  
5 staff report.

6 Q. That's the only reason you have that in  
7 there?

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. Go to the next page, page 4. In No. 5,  
10 the adjustment that is made for Orwell's GCR's  
11 customers is over a period of eight quarters. Do you  
12 know why it's eight quarters versus a shorter time  
13 period?

14 A. Orwell's original adjustment was in their  
15 favor. We agreed to additional disallowances while  
16 we were negotiating with the OCC, but because of the  
17 disallowances, we asked for an extra year to spread  
18 them out over.

19 Q. So that's basically going from an  
20 undercollection to an overcollection. I mean, it  
21 changes towards the customers' favor and you wanted  
22 additional time to make the difference?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay. Go to the next page, page 5. In  
25 No. 8 it talks about including -- well, first of all

1 you, list two cases, 15-475 and 16-637. Although  
2 there is another case that's pending between Orwell  
3 and the pipeline company, why isn't that case  
4 referenced?

5 A. There's no monetary damages associated  
6 with the other case. The other case is a guarantee  
7 of service.

8 Q. Can you tell me when you say "other  
9 relief" there, the last two words in No. 8, what does  
10 that refer to? What other relief would that be  
11 referring to?

12 A. Anything that the Commission orders.

13 Q. In 9A, the word "damages" there in A,  
14 does that include punitive damages? What kind of  
15 damages does that include?

16 A. I think there's a question as to whether  
17 or not their pipeline tariffs were fair and  
18 reasonable and, if the Commission decides to adjust  
19 their pipeline tariffs, that savings would go to the  
20 consumer.

21 Q. Okay. And the word "refund," is that  
22 referencing money that should be passed through to  
23 customers through the GCR? Is that what that's  
24 referring to?

25 A. Yes.

1           Q.    And in A it talks about any damages up to  
2           \$200,000. B it talks about monies in excess of  
3           \$200,000. What's the rationale for allowing the  
4           company to recover amounts -- any amounts?

5           A.    We prepaid some of the money in the  
6           Stipulation where Orwell went from an undercollection  
7           to an overcollection.

8           Q.    You paid that in the Stipulation? What  
9           Stipulation?

10          A.    This one. We paid additional -- we  
11          allowed additional disallowances of OTP costs as a  
12          part of the settlement.

13          Q.    So this is allowing you to recoup that  
14          back?

15          A.    Some of it, yes.

16          Q.    Is the anticipation that the amount will  
17          be in excess of \$200,000?

18          A.    I honestly can't answer that.

19          Q.    On page 6, C2, there's a reference to a  
20          Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing, a nonpaying customer's  
21          Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing. Is this referencing a  
22          particular customer?

23          A.    No. It's a company policy. I believe  
24          that Orwell as soon the get a bankruptcy notice, they  
25          are putting the money on the bad debt rider instead



1 of waiting the required 180 days.

2 Q. Has this happened already?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Is it one customer in particular?

5 A. I believe it was one.

6 Q. Do you know who the customer is?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Do you know the amount that's involved  
9 here?

10 A. I do not.

11 Q. But, in any event, that bad debt is going  
12 to be in the bad debt rider account, which would be  
13 recouped from GCR customers; is that accurate?

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: That's all the  
16 questions I have. Thank you.

17 Is there anything further from the  
18 company?

19 MR. YURICK: No, your Honor. We renew  
20 our motion to admit Joint Exhibit 1 and Companies  
21 Exhibit A.

22 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Any objection to  
23 the admission of Companies Exhibit A?

24 MR. SERIO: No, your Honor.

25 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: That will be

1 admitted.

2 (EXHIBITS ADMITTED INTO EVIDENCE.)

3 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Anything further  
4 from the companies?

5 MR. YURICK: No, your Honor.

6 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Anything further?

7 MR. MARGARD: No, your Honor.

8 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Anything from  
9 OCC?

10 MR. SERIO: Yes, your Honor. We call  
11 Greg Slone for his testimony.

12 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Does his  
13 testimony have anything to do with the Stipulation?

14 MR. SERIO: We believe that his testimony  
15 provides the Commission a basis for determining that  
16 the Stipulation is the reasonable, and we would like  
17 his testimony put into the record. We can waive it  
18 in or I can call him to the stand.

19 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: You can call him  
20 to the stand.

21 MR. SERIO: We call Greg Slone to the  
22 stand.

23 Do you need a copy, your Honor?

24 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Thank you.

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GREGORY SLONE

being first duly sworn, as prescribed by law, was examined and testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

By Mr. Serio:

Q. Please state your name for the record.

A. Gregory Slone.

Q. And give your business address.

A. It's -- I actually don't recall. It's 10 West Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio, 43215.

Q. Thank you. And are you the same Greg Slone who previously filed testimony on July 23, 2015?

A. I am.

Q. Do you have a copy of that with you?

A. I do now.

Q. And was that testimony prepared by yourself or under your direct supervision?

A. It was.

Q. And do you have any changes or modifications to the testimony?

A. I do not.

Q. And if I were to ask you the same questions today, would your answers be the same?

A. They would.

1 MR. SERIO: Mr. Slone is available for  
2 cross-examination, your Honor.

3 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Okay. Are you  
4 marking this exhibit?

5 MR. SERIO: Yes. We would like to mark  
6 this for purposes of identification OCC Exhibit  
7 No. 1.

8 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: So marked.  
9 (EXHIBIT MARKED FOR IDENTIFICATION.)

10 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Does staff have  
11 any questions for the witness?

12 MR. MARGARD: No, your Honor.

13 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Do the companies  
14 have any questions?

15 MR. YURICK: No, your Honor.

16 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: I don't have any  
17 questions.

18 MR. SERIO: Thank you, your Honor. We  
19 move OCC Exhibit No. 1 into the record.

20 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Any objection to  
21 the admission of OCC Exhibit No. 1?

22 Hearing none, I will note that parts of  
23 this testimony do not relate to the Stipulation. I'm  
24 not even sure the word "Stipulation" appears in this  
25 document.

1           Would that be correct? Does the word  
2 "Stipulation" or "Amended Stipulation" appear in the  
3 testimony?

4           MR. SERIO: I can say "Amended  
5 Stipulation" does not. I don't recall if the word  
6 "Stipulation" does or not. Our intent was to explain  
7 the OCC's position when taken in totality with the  
8 book audit reports, and the resulting Stipulation  
9 shows the reason for the parties meeting where they  
10 did.

11           THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: I'm going to  
12 reserve ruling on there at this time, and I will --  
13 that's it, at this time.

14           Anything further?

15           MR. YURICK: No, your Honor. Thank you  
16 very much.

17           THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: I leave the  
18 record open in the event that the Commission has any  
19 questions.

20           Thank you.

21           MR. SERIO: Thank you, your Honor.

22           THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Before we  
23 conclude, the proof of publication, did you make that  
24 an exhibit?

25           MR. PARRAM: We did not. We can if you

1 would like. We filed that on Friday with the docket.

2 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: It is doctored?

3 MR. PARRAM: Yes. It was filed on  
4 Friday.

5 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Off the record  
6 for a second.

7 (Discussion off record.)

8 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: It's been  
9 docketed. It's been filed. It's the part of docket.

10 MR. YURICK: Thank you, your Honor. The  
11 proof of publication was previously docketed. That  
12 was filed on the 24th. We would like to, with the  
13 Court's permission, mark that Companies Exhibit 3,  
14 and move for the admission into the record of Company  
15 Exhibit B, the proof of publication.

16 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: Okay. Any  
17 objections to the admission?

18 MR. SERIO: No objection, your Honor.

19 MR. MARGARD: No.

20 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: It will be  
21 admitted.

22 (EXHIBIT ADMITTED INTO EVIDENCE.)

23 MR. YURICK: Thank you, your Honor.

24 THE ATTORNEY EXAMINER: I also note there  
25 were no members of public present at the hearing.

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Thank you. We will adjourn at this time.

(The hearing adjourned at 10:23 a.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the proceedings taken by me in this matter on Tuesday, July 28, 2015, and carefully compared with my original stenographic notes.

---

Rosemary Foster Anderson,  
Professional Reporter and Notary  
Public in and for the State of  
Ohio.

My commission expires April 5, 2019.  
(RFA-78982)

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**in**

**Case No(s). 14-0206-GA-GCR, 14-0209-GA-GCR, 14-0212-GA-GCR, 14-0309-GA-UEx, 14-0312-GA-UEx**

Summary: Transcript in the matter of Brainard Gas Corporation, Northeast Ohio Natural Gas Corporation, and Orwell Natural Gas Company hearing held on 07/28/15 electronically filed by Mr. Ken Spencer on behalf of Armstrong & Okey, Inc. and Anderson, Rosemary Foster Mrs.