

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF
SUBURBAN NATURAL GAS COMPANY
FOR APPROVAL TO ADJUST ITS ENERGY
EFFICIENCY PROGRAM RIDER RATE.

CASE NO. 21-105-GA-RDR

FINDING AND ORDER

Entered in the Journal on March 24, 2021

I. SUMMARY

{¶ 1} The Commission approves the application of Suburban Natural Gas Company to adjust its Rider Energy Efficiency Program rate.

II. DISCUSSION

{¶ 2} Suburban Natural Gas Company (Suburban 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 the Commission.

{¶ 3} On November 1, 2017, in Case No. 17-594-GA-ALT, pursuant to R.C. 4929.05, 4929.051, and 4909.18, the Commission approved Suburban's alternative rate plan application, subject to certain modifications, to implement a revenue decoupling mechanism with a straight fixed variable rate design, to be phased in over a two-year period, including a commitment by Suburban to file, in a new docket, an Energy Efficiency Program (EEP) pilot application to weatherize the residences of Suburban's high-usage Percentage of Income Payment Plan-Plus customers. The associated cost recovery mechanism, Rider EEP, was initially set at a rate of zero. *In re Suburban Natural Gas Co.*, Case No. 17-594-GA-ALT, Finding and Order (Nov. 1, 2017).

{¶ 4} On March 16, 2018, in Case No. 18-376-GA-RDR, Suburban filed its application for an EEP pilot and Rider EEP mechanism. On November 7, 2018, the Commission approved Suburban's application to establish a two-year EEP pilot and set the Rider EEP rate at \$0.3431 per month applicable to the Company's Small General Service rate schedule

accounts. *In re Suburban Natural Gas Co.*, Case No. 18-376-GA-RDR (*EEP Case*), Finding and Order (Nov. 7, 2018).

{¶ 5} In Suburban's last annual audit case, the Rider EEP rate was reduced to \$0.0574 per month applicable to Small General Service rate schedule accounts. *In re Suburban Natural Gas Co.*, Case No. 20-353-GA-RDR, Finding and Order (Apr. 22, 2020).

{¶ 6} On February 1, 2021, as amended on February 11, 2021, in the above-captioned case, Suburban filed its annual reconciliation application to adjust its Rider EEP rate to recognize the results of the audit ordered by the Commission. *EEP Case* at ¶ 15. In its application, Suburban reports that EEP expenditures totaled only \$20,685 for the second year of the pilot program due to the pandemic. As a result, Suburban states the program has a balance of \$78,746. Further, Suburban admits that the Company inadvertently continued to collect Rider EEP, after the end of its approved two-year term in November 2020, which caused an additional over recovery of \$2,712. On February 11, 2021, Suburban filed revised tariff sheets, effective immediately, to reduce the Rider EEP rate to zero. Suburban proposes to adjust its Rider EEP to a credit of \$0.05 per month, for three months, to return the over recovery inadvertently collected and then set the rider to zero.¹

{¶ 7} On March 2, 2021, Staff filed its review and recommendations. Staff confirmed that Suburban's Rider EEP correctly calculates the rider charges to refund the over collection of \$2,712 and recommends the proposed credit of \$0.05 per month be approved for three months. Subsequently, Staff recommends that the rider rate be set to \$0.00 until the separate application to address the outstanding over overcollection of \$78,746 is addressed by the Commission.

{¶ 8} After reviewing the application and Staff's review and recommendation, the Commission finds that the reconciliation of Suburban's Rider EEP is reasonable and should

¹ In a separate case, Case No. 21-124-GA-ALT, Suburban filed a joint motion seeking approval to extend the energy efficiency pilot program and Rider EEP for an additional 12 months, subject to final reconciliation, to afford customers the benefits of the program balance of \$78,746.

be approved, including the tariffs filed February 11, 2021. Further, the Commission finds that no hearing is required in this case.

III. ORDER

{¶ 9} It is, therefore,

{¶ 10} ORDERED, That Suburban's tariffs, as filed February 11, 2021, to adjust the Rider EEP rate to \$0.000 per month applicable to Small General Service rate schedule accounts be approved. It is, further,

{¶ 11} ORDERED, That Suburban's application to adjust the Rider EEP rate to a credit of \$0.05 per month applicable to Small General Service rate schedule accounts, for three months, be approved. It is, further,

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

{¶ 13} 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,

{¶ 14} ORDERED, That Suburban shall notify all affected customers via a bill message or bill insert within 30 days of the effective date of the 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,

{¶ 15} 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,

{¶ 16} ORDERED, That a copy of this Finding and Order be served upon all parties and interested persons of record.

COMMISSIONERS:

Approving:

M. Beth Trombold
Lawrence K. Friedeman
Daniel R. Conway
Dennis P. Deters

GNS/hac

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Case No(s). 21-0105-GA-RDR

Summary: Finding & Order approving the application of Suburban Natural Gas Company to adjust its Rider Energy Efficiency Program rate electronically filed by Heather A Chilcote on behalf of Public Utilities Commission of Ohio