

**BEFORE
THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO**

In the Matter of the Application of Co-)
lumbia Gas of Ohio, Inc. for Authority to)
Amend its Filed Tariffs to Increase the) Case No. 21-637-GA-AIR
Rates and Charges for Gas Services and)
Related Matters.)

In the Matter of the Application of Co-)
lumbia Gas of Ohio, Inc. for Approval of) Case No. 21-638-GA-ALT
an Alternative Form of Regulation.)

In the Matter of the Application of Co-)
lumbia Gas of Ohio, Inc. for Approval of)
a Demand Side Management Program) Case No. 21-639-GA-UNC
for its Residential and Commercial Cus-)
tomers.)

In the Matter of the Application of Co-)
lumbia Gas of Ohio, Inc. for Approval to) Case No. 21-640-GA-AAM
Change Accounting Methods.)

**PREPARED DIRECT TESTIMONY OF
DONALD AYERS
ON BEHALF OF COLUMBIA GAS OF OHIO, INC.**

- ☐ Management policies, practices, and organization
- ☒ Operating income
- ☐ Rate base
- ☐ Allocations
- ☐ Rate of return
- ☐ Rates and tariffs
- ☒ Other

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July 14, 2021

Attorneys for
COLUMBIA GAS OF OHIO, INC.

**PREPARED DIRECT TESTIMONY
OF DONALD AYERS**

1 **Q. Please state your name and business address.**

2 A. Donald Ayers. My current business address is 290 W. Nationwide Blvd.,
3 Columbus, OH, 43215.

4
5 **Q. By whom are you employed?**

6 A. Columbia Gas of Ohio, Inc. ("Columbia").
7

8 **Q. Will you please state briefly your educational background and experi-
9 ence?**

10 A. I graduated in 1982 from Quantico High School in Virginia. I attended The
11 Ohio State University and Franklin University. I have 33 years of experience
12 in natural gas Field Operations, System Operations, and Construction Ser-
13 vices.
14

15 **Q. What are your job responsibilities as Director of System Operations?**

16 A. I am currently responsible for Operation & Maintenance ("O&M") and
17 capital work related to corrosion remediation, leakage inspection, and
18 Measurement and Regulation ("M&R") functions.
19

20 **Q. What is the purpose of your testimony in this proceeding?**

21 A. I will explain the pro forma adjustment for incremental technical training
22 labor hours in 2022. I will also be providing testimony supporting the de-
23 ferral request related to the Company's use of new leakage inspection tech-
24 nology from Picarro, Inc.
25

26 **Q. Does Columbia include a pro forma adjustment for incremental technical
27 training?**

28 A. Yes, Columbia includes \$1.5 million in its cost of service for incremental
29 labor associated with technical training in calendar year 2022.
30

31 **Q. What training is included in the \$1.5 million pro forma adjustment?**

32 A. The \$1.5 million represents the incremental hours Columbia's field
33 employees will be training in 2022. Of the \$1.5 million, \$1.48 million consists
34 of labor incremental hours to train and \$30,000 for employee expenses to
35 cover travel costs to and from the Gahanna training center.
36

1 **Q. Did Columbia base the \$1.5 million on any particular assumptions?**

2 A. Yes. The \$1.5 million is based on employees transferring to 18 incremental
3 System Operations positions from Field Operations in calendar year 2021,
4 backfilling 30 field positions in Construction from Field Operations in
5 calendar year 2021, and employees transferring to 40 incremental
6 Construction positions from Field Operations in calendar year 2022. The
7 training comprising the New Hire, Plant and Service, and Measurement
8 and Regulation courses are for these positions.

9
10 **Q. Is Columbia requesting a new deferral?**

11 A. Yes. Columbia is requesting a new deferral for the piloting and implemen-
12 tation of new mobile leak detection technology from Picarro, Inc.
13 ("Picarro"). Traditional leakage inspection methods involve a worker using
14 a gas detector walking over the top of mains and service lines. Although
15 this is the industry standard for leakage inspection, multiple factors can af-
16 fect its effectiveness, including the soil's moisture content and density.
17 Picarro is a new leakage inspection technology that enables Columbia to
18 perform leakage inspection surveys without having to walk over the top of
19 its facilities. The Picarro technology is installed on a vehicle and can have a
20 range of view of up to 400 feet.

21
22 **Q. What does Columbia know about the future deployment of Picarro and**
23 **costs associated with implementation?**

24 A. Columbia is currently piloting Picarro and gathering information about the
25 technology, and will be utilizing this pilot data to determine the future de-
26 ployment of the Picarro technology throughout Columbia's service area.

27
28 **Q. Does this complete your Prepared Direct Testimony?**

29 A. Yes, it does. However, I reserve the right to supplement this testimony.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio's e-filing system will electronically serve notice of the filing of this document on the parties referenced on the service list of the docket card who have electronically subscribed to the case. In addition, the undersigned hereby certifies that a copy of the foregoing document is also being served via electronic mail on the 14th day of July, 2021, upon the persons listed below.

/s/ Joseph M. Clark

Joseph M. Clark

Attorney for

COLUMBIA GAS OF OHIO, INC.

SERVICE LIST

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Summary: Testimony Direct Testimony of Donald Ayers electronically filed by Ms. Melissa L. Thompson on behalf of Columbia Gas of Ohio, Inc.