

## THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF COLUMBIA GAS OF OHIO, INC. FOR AUTHORITY TO AMEND ITS FILED TARIFFS TO INCREASE THE RATES AND CHARGES FOR GAS SERVICES AND RELATED MATTERS.

CASE NO. 21-637-GA-AIR

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF COLUMBIA GAS OF OHIO, INC. FOR APPROVAL OF AN ALTERNATIVE FORM OF REGULATION.

CASE NO. 21-638-GA-ALT

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF COLUMBIA GAS OF OHIO, INC. FOR APPROVAL OF A DEMAND SIDE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR ITS RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL CUSTOMERS.

CASE NO. 21-639-GA-UNC

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF COLUMBIA GAS OF OHIO, INC. FOR APPROVAL TO CHANGE ACCOUNTING METHODS.

CASE NO. 21-640-GA-AAM

### ENTRY

Entered in the Journal on November 3, 2022

{¶ 1} Columbia Gas of Ohio, Inc. (Columbia or the Company) is a natural gas company and a public utility as defined by R.C. 4905.03 and R.C. 4905.02, respectively. As such, Columbia is subject to the jurisdiction of this Commission pursuant to R.C. 4905.04, 4905.05, and 4905.06.

{¶ 2} The fixation of rates for public utilities in the state of Ohio is governed by R.C. Chapter 4909. The statutory requirements for an application to increase a public utility's rates are enumerated in R.C. 4909.17, 4909.18, 4909.19, and 4909.43. Also, pursuant to R.C. 4901.13, 4909.04(C), and 4909.18, the Commission adopted Ohio Adm.Code 4901-7-01 and its Appendix (Standard Filing Requirements). These Standard Filing Requirements specify

the format for filing all information required in an application for an increase in rates and define the information that the Commission requires pursuant to R.C. 4909.18(E).

{¶ 3} Further, pursuant to R.C. 4929.05(A), a natural gas company may request approval of an alternative rate plan by filing an application to establish or change a rate under R.C. 4909.18.

{¶ 4} On May 28, 2021, Columbia filed separate notices of its intent to file an application for an increase in rates and an application for approval of an alternative rate plan. First, in accordance with Ohio Adm.Code 4901-7-01, Appendix A, Chapter I(B), the Company filed notice of intent to file an application for an increase in rates. Second, pursuant to Ohio Adm.Code 4901:1-19-06(A), the Company filed a notice of its intent to file an application for approval of an alternative rate plan.

{¶ 5} Also, on May 28, 2021, Columbia filed a motion to establish a test year and date certain and for waiver of certain filing requirements pursuant to R.C. 4909.15(C) and Ohio Adm.Code 4901-7-01 and 4901:1-19-02(D), respectively. By Entry issued July 7, 2021, the Commission approved the test year and date certain and granted, in part, and denied, in part, the requested waiver of specified Standard Filing Requirements.

{¶ 6} On June 30, 2021, Columbia filed a combined application to increase rates and charges and for approval of an alternative rate plan pursuant to R.C. 4909.18 and R.C. 4929.05, respectively.

{¶ 7} On August 10, 2021, in Case No. 21-637-GA-AIR, Staff filed a letter stating that Columbia's application substantively conformed with the Standard Filing Requirements found in Ohio Adm.Code 4901-7-01, Appendix A.

{¶ 8} By Entry dated August 25, 2021, the Commission found that Columbia's application for an increase in rates and for an alternative rate plan be accepted for filing as of June 30, 2021.

{¶ 9} Staff conducted an investigation of the facts, exhibits, and matters relating to Columbia's applications. On April 6, 2022, Staff filed a comprehensive written report of its investigation in the above-captioned case dockets.

{¶ 10} By Entry dated April 14, 2022, the attorney examiner issued a procedural schedule, setting the matter for hearing on June 15, 2022.

{¶ 11} On May 11, 2022, the attorney examiner issued an Entry scheduling the local public hearings and rescheduling the prehearing conference. On May 19, 2022, the attorney examiner issued an Entry scheduling an additional local public hearing and further rescheduling the prehearing conference.

{¶ 12} On June 3, 2022, the attorney examiner granted Columbia's unopposed motion for a continuance and rescheduled the evidentiary hearing to July 13, 2022. Further, motions for intervention were granted for Ohio Energy Group, Ohio Consumers' Counsel, Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy (OPAE), Interstate Gas Supply, Inc., Retail Energy Supply Association, Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council, Ohio School Council, Ohio Manufacturers' Association Energy Group, Environmental Law & Policy Center (ELPC), The Kroger Co., Citizens' Utility Board of Ohio (CUB), and Industrial Energy Users-Ohio.

{¶ 13} Subsequently, on July 1, 2022, the attorney examiner granted Columbia's unopposed request for a continuance and rescheduled the evidentiary hearing to August 9, 2022. On August 5, 2022, the date for evidentiary hearing was further extended to October 18, 2022, at Columbia's request. On October 13, 2022, Columbia's unopposed motion for a continuance was granted, and the evidentiary hearing was rescheduled for November 1, 2022.

{¶ 14} On October 27, 2022, OPAE, CUB, and ELPC filed a motion to modify the procedural schedule to allow time to prepare testimony to oppose a stipulation that was expected to be filed ahead of the November 1, 2022 evidentiary hearing. The parties proposed a procedural schedule that includes commencing the evidentiary hearing on

December 13, 2022. The moving parties also proposed converting the November 1, 2022 hearing date to a prehearing conference.

{¶ 15} On October 28, 2022, Columbia filed a memorandum contra the motion. Columbia clarified that it did not oppose converting the hearing to a prehearing conference but did oppose the proposed procedural schedule. Instead, Columbia proposed a hearing date of November 15, 2022, which it argued would allow any opposing parties time to prepare but balance the need for a timely hearing.

{¶ 16} By email on October 28, 2022, the attorney examiner communicated to the parties that the November 1, 2022 hearing would be converted to a prehearing conference, at which time the procedural schedule would be discussed.

{¶ 17} On October 31, 2022, a joint stipulation and recommendation (Stipulation) was filed.

{¶ 18} At the November 1, 2022 prehearing conference, the parties discussed the procedural schedule and hearing date availability.

{¶ 19} At this time, the attorney examiner finds that the evidentiary hearing previously scheduled for November 1, 2022, should be rescheduled to November 16, 2022, at 9:00 a.m., in Hearing Room 11-A at the offices of the Commission, 180 East Broad Street, 11th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793. The parties should register at the lobby desk and then proceed to the 11th floor to participate in the hearing.

{¶ 20} Any accommodations necessary to ensure availability of social distancing and plexiglass dividers should be made in advance of the hearing. As pandemic restrictions are evolving, additional instructions regarding further safety requirements or accommodations for the hearing room will be forthcoming, either posted on the Commission's website or communicated to the parties.

{¶ 21} The attorney examiner further finds that the following procedural schedule should be adopted:

- a. November 4, 2022 – Deadline to serve discovery requests. Additionally, the response time for discovery requests moving forward will be reduced to three business days.
- b. November 7, 2022 – Deadline to file testimony in support of the Stipulation.
- c. November 9, 2022 – Deadline for Staff to file testimony regarding objections.
- d. November 14, 2022 – Deadline to file testimony in opposition to the Stipulation.

{¶ 22} It is, therefore,

{¶ 23} ORDERED, That the evidentiary hearing be rescheduled for November 16, 2022, as set forth in Paragraph 19. It is, further,

{¶ 24} ORDERED, That the procedural schedule be adopted, as set forth in Paragraph 21. It is, further,

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

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

*/s/ Jacky Werman St. John*

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By: Jacky Werman St. John  
Attorney Examiner

MLW/mef

**This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities  
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**Case No(s). 21-0637-GA-AIR, 21-0638-GA-ALT, 21-0639-GA-UNC, 21-0640-GA-AAM**

Summary: Attorney Examiner Entry rescheduling the evidentiary hearing for November 16, 2022, in Hearing Room 11-A at the offices of the Commission and adopting the following procedural schedule: November 4, 2022 – Deadline to serve discovery requests; November 7, 2022 – Deadline to file testimony in support of the Stipulation; November 9, 2022 – Deadline for Staff to file testimony; and, November 14, 2022 – Deadline to file testimony in opposition to the Stipulation. electronically filed by Ms. Mary E. Fischer on behalf of Jacky Werman St. John, Attorney Examiner, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio