

ORIGINAL

STATE OF INDIANA

INDIANA UTILITY REGULATORY COMMISSION


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APPLICATION OF SOUTHERN INDIANA)
GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY D/B/A)
VECTREN ENERGY DELIVERY OF)
INDIANA, INC. ("VECTREN SOUTH") FOR)
APPROVAL OF CHANGES IN ITS GAS)
COST ADJUSTMENTS IN ACCORDANCE)
WITH I.C. 8-1-2-42(g) AND 8-1-2-42.3.)

CAUSE NO. 37366 GCA 105

APPROVED: JAN 27 2010

BY THE COMMISSION:

James D. Atterholt, Commissioner
Angela Rapp Weber, Administrative Law Judge

On December 3, 2009, in accordance with Indiana Code § 8-1-2-42, Southern Indiana Gas and Electric Company d/b/a Vectren Energy Delivery of Indiana, Inc. ("Petitioner") filed its Petition for Gas Cost Adjustment ("GCA"), with attached Schedules, to be applicable during the billing cycles of February 2010 through April 2010 with the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission ("Commission"). On December 23, 2009, Petitioner prefiled the verified testimony and exhibits of Scott E. Albertson, Director of Regulatory Affairs; Perry M. Pergola, Director of Gas Supply; and J. Cas Swiz, Manager of Regulatory and Plant Accounting supporting the proposed GCA factors. On January 4, 2010, in conformance with the statute, the Indiana Office of the Utility Consumer Counselor ("OUCC") filed the statistical report and direct testimony of Pamela Sue Sargent Haase, Principal with the London Witte Group.

Pursuant to notice duly published as required by law, proof of which was incorporated into the record by reference and placed in the official files of the Commission, a public hearing was held in this Cause at 9:15 a.m. on January 6, 2010 in Room 224, National City Center, 101 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, Indiana. The Petitioner and the OUCC were present and participated. The testimony and exhibits of both Petitioner and OUCC were admitted into the record. No members of the general public appeared or sought to testify at the hearing.

Based upon the applicable law and the evidence presented herein, the Commission now finds:

1. Statutory Notice and Commission Jurisdiction. Due, legal, and timely notice of the hearing in this Cause was given and published by the Commission as required by law. Petitioner operates a public gas utility, and as such, is subject to the jurisdiction of this Commission as provided in the Public Service Commission Act, as amended. The provisions of said Act authorize the Commission to act in this proceeding. The Commission therefore has jurisdiction over the parties and the subject matter herein.

2. Petitioner's Characteristics. Petitioner is a corporation duly organized and existing under the laws of the State of Indiana. Petitioner has its principal office at One Vectren Square, Evansville, Indiana. Petitioner is engaged in rendering natural gas utility service to the public in

Posey, Vanderburgh, Warrick, Spencer, Pike, Gibson, Knox, and Daviess Counties in Indiana. Petitioner owns, operates, manages, and controls plant and equipment used for the distribution and furnishing of such services.

3. **Source of Natural Gas.** Indiana Code § 8-1-2-42(g)(3)(A) requires Petitioner to make every reasonable effort to acquire long-term natural gas supplies in order to provide service to its customers at lowest gas cost reasonably possible.

According to the testimony of Petitioner's witness Pergola, Petitioner relies upon certain contracts for the provision of firm interstate supply services to its city gate in providing firm supply to customers. As part of his testimony, witness Pergola presented detail regarding Petitioner's firm transportation services utilized on pipeline systems. Mr. Pergola explained that effective April 1, 2009, Petitioner will modify its Gas Supply Portfolio. Consistent with the Settlement Agreement in Cause No. 42973, the Demand Cost Reduction Credit and Value Sharing Credit are included in this GCA filing by the Petitioner. In addition, witness Pergola explained Petitioner's gas purchases made in advance of the coming heating season, pursuant to the Advance Purchases Program as described in his testimony.

The Commission has indicated that Indiana's gas utilities should make reasonable efforts to mitigate gas price volatility. This includes a program that works to mitigate gas price volatility and considers market conditions and the price of natural gas on a current and forward-looking basis. Based on the evidence offered, the Commission finds that Petitioner demonstrated that it has and continues to follow a policy of securing natural gas supply at the lowest gas cost reasonably possible in order to meet anticipated customer requirements. Therefore, the Commission finds that the requirement of this statutory provision has been fulfilled.

4. **Purchased Gas Cost Rates.** Indiana Code § 8-1-2-42(g)(3)(B) requires that Petitioner's pipeline suppliers have requested or filed pursuant to the jurisdiction and procedures of a duly constituted regulatory authority the costs proposed to be included in the GCA factor. The evidence of record indicates that gas costs in this Petition include transport rates that have been filed by Petitioner's pipeline suppliers in accordance with Federal Energy Regulatory Commission procedures. The Commission has reviewed the cost of gas included in the proposed gas cost adjustment charge and finds the costs to be reasonable. Accordingly, the Commission finds that the requirement of this statutory provision has been fulfilled.

5. **Return Earned.** Indiana Code § 8-1-2-42(g)(3)(C), in effect, prohibits approval of a gas cost adjustment that results in Petitioner earning a return in excess of the return authorized by the last Commission proceeding in which Petitioner's basic rates and charges were approved. The most recent proceeding in which Petitioner's basic rates and charges were approved is Cause No. 43112. The Commission's August 1, 2007 Order in that Cause authorized Petitioner to earn a net operating income of \$8,760,160. Petitioner's evidence herein indicates that for the twelve (12) months ending September 30, 2009, Petitioner's actual net operating income was \$7,721,610. Thus, based on the evidence of record, the Commission finds that Petitioner is not earning in excess of that authorized in its last rate case.

Pursuant to the Commission's Orders in Cause Nos. 42943 and 43046, Petitioner conducted a return on equity ("ROE") earnings test. As a result of the earnings test, Petitioner's ROE was

6.80%, which is below the 10.15% ROE authorized in Petitioner's last rate case. The Commission finds Petitioner complied with the requirement for submission of the ROE calculation.

6. Estimation of Purchased Gas Costs. Indiana Code § 8-1-2-42(g)(3)(D) requires that Petitioner's estimate of its prospective average gas costs for each future recovery period be reasonable. The Commission has determined that this requires, in part, a comparison of prior estimations with the eventual actual costs. The evidence presented indicates that the estimating techniques during the reconciliation period of June 2009 through August 2009 ("the Reconciliation Period") yielded an under-estimated weighted average error of 5.04%. Based upon Petitioner's historical accuracy in estimating the cost of gas, the Commission finds that Petitioner's estimating techniques are sound and Petitioner's prospective average estimate of gas is reasonable.

Mr. Albertson testified that the primary component of the June 2009 estimating variance is the over-estimation of the monthly injection price per Dth. The estimated price of injections at the time Vectren South filed its GCA applicable to June 2009 was \$5.6031 per Dth. The actual price of June injections was \$3.550 per Dth. This difference in the injection price led to an actual commodity cost of gas per unit sold that was \$1.03 more for June 2009 than the estimated commodity cost of gas sold during the month. Absent this injection pricing impact on the commodity component of the cost per Dth sold, the estimating variance for June 2009 would have been (6.39)%. Based upon Petitioner's historical accuracy in estimating the cost of gas, the Commission finds that Petitioner's estimating techniques are sound and Petitioner's prospective average estimate of gas is reasonable.

7. Reconciliation. Indiana Code § 8-1-2-42(g)(3)(D) also requires that the Petitioner reconcile its estimation for a previous recovery period with the actual purchased gas cost for that period. The evidence presented in this current proceeding established that the commodity variance for the Reconciliation Period is an under-collection of \$351,799. This amount shall be included, based on estimated sales percentages, in this GCA and the next three GCAs. The amount of the Reconciliation Period commodity variance to be included in this GCA as a increase in the estimated net cost of gas is \$119,225. The commodity variance from prior recovery periods applicable to the current recovery period is an over-collection of \$2,284,619. When this amount is combined with the Reconciliation Period commodity variance, the result is a total over-collection of \$2,165,394 that will be applied in this GCA as a decrease in the estimated net cost of gas.

The evidence presented in this proceeding established that the demand cost variance for the Reconciliation Period is an under-collection of \$799,277. This amount shall be included, based on estimated sales percentages, in this GCA and the next three GCAs. The amount of the Reconciliation Period demand cost variance to be included in this GCA as an increase in the estimated net cost of gas is \$270,875. The demand cost variance from prior recovery periods applicable to the current recovery period is an over-collection of \$440,447. When this amount is combined with the Reconciliation Period demand cost variance, the result is a total over-collection of \$169,572, which is to be applied to this GCA as a decrease in the estimated net cost of gas.

Petitioner received no new refunds during the Reconciliation Period, and has no refunds from prior periods applicable to the current recovery period. Therefore, Petitioner has no refunds to be returned in this Application. Based on the evidence presented, the Commission finds that Petitioner's proposed GCA properly reconciles the difference between the actual costs for the

Reconciliation Period, and the gas costs recovered during that same period.

8. **Resulting Gas Cost Adjustment Factor.** The estimated net commodity cost of gas to be recovered during the application period is \$21,561,048. When this amount is adjusted for the variances, refund, and demand amounts, \$21,114,897 in gas costs are to be recovered in this GCA. After dividing that amount by estimated sales and adjusting for Indiana Utility Receipts Tax, Petitioner's recommended GCA factors are as follows:

Estimated GCA Per Therm

Rate Schedule	Service	February 2010	March 2010	April 2010
110	Sales	\$0.6131	\$0.6080	\$0.6040
120	Sales	\$0.6131	\$0.6080	\$0.6040
125	Transportation	\$0.0000	\$0.0000	\$0.0000
129	Sales	\$0.6131	\$0.6080	\$0.6040
145	Transportation	\$0.0000	\$0.0000	\$0.0000
160	Transportation	\$0.0000	\$0.0000	\$0.0000
170	Transportation	\$0.0000	\$0.0000	\$0.0000

9. **Effects on Residential Customers.** The GCA factor of \$6.0980/Dth represents an increase of \$0.4700/Dth from the current GCA factor of \$5.6280/Dth. The effects of this change for various consumption levels of residential customer bills are shown in the following table:

Table 1
Proposed GCA Factor
vs.
Currently Approved GCA Factor

Monthly Consumption Dth	Bill at New Estimated GCA	Bill at Current GCA	Dollar Change	Percent Change
5	\$52.01	\$49.66	\$2.35	4.73%
10	\$91.26	\$86.56	\$4.70	5.43%
15	\$130.50	\$123.45	\$7.05	5.71%
20	\$169.75	\$160.35	\$9.40	5.86%
25	\$208.99	\$197.24	\$11.75	5.96%

The GCA factor of \$6.0980/Dth represents a decrease of \$1.8230/Dth from the GCA factor of \$7.9210/Dth billed one year ago. The effects of this change for various consumption levels of residential bills are shown in the following table:

Table 2
Proposed GCA Factor
vs.
GCA Factor One Year Ago

Monthly Consumption Dth	Bill at New Estimated GCA Factor	Bill at GCA One Year Ago	Dollar Change	Percent Change
5	\$52.01	\$61.56	\$(9.55)	(15.51)%
10	\$91.26	\$110.33	\$(19.07)	(17.28)%
15	\$130.50	\$159.12	\$(28.62)	(17.99)%
20	\$169.75	\$207.91	\$(38.16)	(18.35)%
25	\$208.99	\$256.70	\$(47.71)	(18.59)%

10. **Interim Rates.** The Commission is unable to determine whether Petitioner will earn an excess return while this GCA is in effect. Accordingly, the Commission has authorized that the approved rates herein should be interim rates subject to refund pending reconciliation in the event an excess return is earned.

11. **Monthly Flex Mechanism.** Petitioner proposed to utilize a flex mechanism each month to adjust the GCA for the subsequent month. The flex will apply only to estimated pricing of estimated market purchases (the initial market price) in the GCA. The flex will be filed no less than three (3) days before the beginning of each calendar month during the GCA quarter. Market purchases in the flex will be priced at NYMEX prices on a day no more than six (6) business days prior to the beginning of said calendar month. Changes in the market price included in the flex will be limited to a maximum adjustment (up or down) of \$1.00 from the initial market price. This pricing and monthly flex methodology is consistent with Exhibit 2 in the Settlement Agreement in Cause No. 42890 that was approved by the Commission on October 5, 2005.

This Commission has indicated in prior orders that Indiana's gas utilities should make reasonable efforts to mitigate gas price volatility. Petitioner's proposal for a monthly flexing mechanism is designed to address this Commission's concerns. In addition, the Commission authorized this mechanism for other gas utilities. Therefore, it is reasonable to authorize Petitioner to initiate a monthly flex mechanism in the manner it has here proposed.

12. **Unaccounted for Gas.** The Commission's Order in Cause No. 43112 approved Petitioner's recovery of unaccounted-for gas in its quarterly GCA filings. Pursuant to that Order, the amount of unaccounted-for gas that Petitioner may recover is capped at 1.2% and will be reflected in Schedule 11B. In addition, the Order in Cause No. 43112 permitted Petitioner's annual unaccounted-for gas to be reviewed after August 31st of each year and reflected on Schedule 11B. The Commission finds that the methodology employed by Petitioner in this GCA filing to be appropriate and in accordance with the Order in Cause No. 43112. Petitioner will continue to file Schedule 11A for informational purposes.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED BY THE INDIANA UTILITY REGULATORY COMMISSION THAT:

1. The Petition of Southern Indiana Gas and Electric Company d/b/a Vectren Energy Delivery of Indiana, Inc. for the gas cost adjustment for natural gas service, as set out in Finding Paragraph No. 8, shall be and hereby is approved, subject to refund in accordance with Finding Paragraph No. 10.

2. Petitioner is authorized to implement a monthly flex mechanism in accordance with Paragraph No. 11.

3. Petitioner shall file with the Commission under this Cause, prior to placing in effect the gas cost adjustment factors approved herein, or any future flexed factor, separate amendments to its rate schedules with reasonable references thereon reflecting that such charges are applicable to the rate schedule on these amendments.

4. This Order shall be effective on and after the date of its approval.

HARDY, ATTERHOLT, GOLC, LANDIS, AND ZIEGNER CONCUR:

APPROVED: JAN 27 2010

I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of the Order as approved.



Brenda A. Howe
Secretary to the Commission