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STATE OF INDIANA

INDIANA UTILITY REGULATORY COMMISSION

PETITION OF SYCAMORE GAS COMPANY )  
FOR APPROVAL OF GAS COST )  
ADJUSTMENTS TO BE APPLICABLE ) CAUSE NO. 37368 GCA 118  
DURING THE MONTHS OF MAY, JUNE AND )  
JULY 2013 PURSUANT TO I.C. §§ 8-1-2-42 ) APPROVED: APR 24 2013  
AND 8-1-2-42.3 )

ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

**Presiding Officers:**  
**Carolene Mays, Commissioner**  
**Loraine L. Seyfried, Chief Administrative Law Judge**

On February 28, 2013, in accordance with Indiana Code § 8-1-2-42, Sycamore Gas Company, Inc. ("Petitioner") filed a Verified Petition for a Gas Cost Adjustment ("GCA") with attached Schedules to be applicable during the billing cycles of May, June and July, 2013. On that same day, Petitioner prefiled the direct testimony of John T. Stenger, Consultant, and Alex W. Pardo, Chief Financial Officer, supporting the proposed GCA factors. Petitioner also filed supplemental testimony, with certain revised exhibits, on April 4, 2013. On April 9, 2013, in conformance with the statute, the Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor ("OUCC") filed the statistical report and direct testimony of Laura J. Anderson, Utility Analyst.

Pursuant to notice given and published as required by law, proof of which was incorporated into the record by reference and placed in the official files of the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission ("Commission"), a public hearing was commenced at 10:00 a.m. on April 15, 2013 in Room 224, PNC Center, 101 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, Indiana. Petitioner and the OUCC were present and participated. The testimony and exhibits of Petitioner and the OUCC were admitted into the record without objection. No members of the general public appeared.

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

**1. Statutory Notice and Commission Jurisdiction.** Notice of the hearing in this Cause was given and published by the Commission as required by law. Petitioner is a public utility as defined in Ind. Code § 8-1-2-1(a). Under Ind. Code § 8-1-2-42(g), the Commission has jurisdiction over changes to Petitioner's rates and charges related to adjustments in gas costs. Therefore, the Commission has jurisdiction over Petitioner and the subject matter of this Cause.

**2. Petitioner's Characteristics.** Petitioner is a corporation duly organized and existing under the laws of the State of Indiana. Petitioner's principal office is located at 1155 East Eads Parkway, Greendale, Indiana. Petitioner renders natural gas utility service to the

public in Dearborn, Franklin, and Ohio counties in Indiana; and owns, operates, manages and controls plant and equipment used for the distribution and furnishing of such services.

3. **Source of Natural Gas.** Ind. Code § 8-1-2-42(g)(3)(A) requires Petitioner to make every reasonable effort to acquire long-term gas supplies so as to provide gas to its retail customers at the lowest gas cost reasonably possible.

Petitioner's testimony and exhibits show that Petitioner continues to have a contract in place with a marketer for firm gas supply through the upcoming summer season, which provides supply on a non-interruptible basis to Petitioner's customers. Petitioner has the option to purchase a portion of its portfolio on "first of the month" and/or "daily" prices. Mr. Stenger testified that Petitioner can also purchase a portion of its gas through fixed price contracts. In addition, Petitioner will refill its interstate pipeline storage throughout the summer season. Petitioner has hedged approximately 55% of its total supply requirements for the upcoming GCA quarter, and continues to review different strategies for future hedging of its gas supply requirements.

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 current and forward-looking bases. Based on the evidence offered, we find that Petitioner has 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.** Ind. 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 charges and finds the cost to be reasonable. Therefore, the Commission finds that the requirement of this statutory provision has been fulfilled.

5. **Return Earned.** Ind. Code § 8-1-2-42(g)(3)(C), in effect, prohibits approval of a gas cost adjustment which 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. Petitioner's current basic rates and charges were approved on June 20, 2007 in Cause No. 43090. The Commission authorized Petitioner to earn a net operating income of \$1,345,858. Petitioner's evidence indicates that for the twelve (12) months ending December 31, 2012, Petitioner's actual net operating income was \$1,288,935. Therefore, based on the evidence of record, the Commission finds Petitioner is not earning in excess of that authorized in its last rate case.

6. **Estimation of Purchased Gas Costs.** Ind. 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

estimates with the corresponding actual costs. The evidence presented indicates that Petitioner's estimating techniques during the reconciliation period of October through December, 2012 (the "Reconciliation Period") yielded an under-estimated weighted average error of 5.68%.

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 costs is reasonable.

## 7. Reconciliations.

A. Variances. Ind. Code § 8-1-2-42(g)(3)(D) also requires that the Petitioner reconcile its estimate for a previous recovery period with the actual purchased gas cost for that period. The evidence presented in this proceeding establishes that the variance for the Reconciliation Period is an under-collection of \$119,489 from its customers. This amount should be included, based on estimated sales percentages, in this GCA and the next three GCAs. The amount of the Reconciliation Period variance to be included in this GCA as an increase in the estimated net cost of gas is \$9,792.

The variance from prior recovery periods applicable to the current recovery period is an under-collection of \$39,790. Combining this amount with the Reconciliation Period variance, results in a total under-collection of \$49,582 to be applied in this GCA as an increase in the estimated net cost of gas.

B. Refunds. Petitioner received no new refunds during the Reconciliation Period, and has \$738 in refunds from prior periods applicable to the current recovery period. We find that the amount to be refunded to customers in this GCA is \$738 as reflected on Schedule 12A.

8. Resulting Gas Cost Adjustment Factor. The estimated net cost of gas to be recovered for May 2013 is \$157,644, for June 2013 is \$125,512 and for July 2013 is \$136,383. Adjusting this total for the variance, refund and unaccounted for gas amounts yields gas costs to be recovered through the GCA factor of \$172,973 for May 2013, \$141,094 for June 2013 and \$151,884 for July 2013. After dividing that amount by estimated sales and adjusting for Indiana Utility Receipts Tax, Petitioner's recommended GCA factors are \$5.4897/Dth for May 2013, \$5.7380/Dth for June 2013 and \$5.7169/Dth for July 2013.

9. Effects on Residential Customers – (GCA Cost Comparison). Petitioner requests authority to approve the GCA factor of \$5.4897/Dth for May 2013, \$5.7380/Dth for June 2013 and \$5.7169/Dth for July 2013. The table below shows the commodity costs a residential customer will incur under the proposed GCA factor based on 10 Dth of usage. The table also compares the proposed gas costs to what a residential customer paid recently (March 2013 - \$5.2754/Dth) and a year ago (May 2012 - \$4.0469/Dth, June 2012 - \$4.5472/Dth and July 2012 - \$4.5177/Dth). The table reflects costs approved through the GCA process. It does not include Petitioner's base rates or any applicable rate adjustment mechanisms.

Month	Proposed Gas Costs (10 Dth)	Current		Year Ago	
		Gas Costs (10 Dth)	Difference from Current	Gas Costs (10 Dth)	Difference from Year Ago
May	\$ 54.90	\$ 52.75	\$ 2.15	\$ 40.47	\$ 14.43
June	\$ 57.38	\$ 52.75	\$ 4.63	\$ 45.47	\$ 11.91
July	\$ 51.17	\$ 52.75	\$ 4.42	\$ 45.18	\$ 11.99

10. **Interim Rates.** The Commission is unable to determine whether Petitioner will earn an excess return while these GCA factors are in effect. Accordingly, the rates approved in this Order are interim rates subject to refund pending reconciliation in the event an excess return is earned.

11. **Monthly Flex Mechanism.** This Commission has indicated in prior Orders that Indiana's gas utilities should make reasonable efforts to mitigate gas price volatility. Petitioner's approved monthly flex mechanism is designed to address the Commission's concerns. Therefore, Petitioner may utilize a monthly flex mechanism to adjust the GCA for the subsequent month. The flex applies only to estimated pricing of estimated market purchases (the initial market price) in the GCA. In accordance with the Commission's July 30, 2009 Order in Cause No. 37368 GCA 103, the flex is to be filed no less than five (5) days before the beginning of each calendar month during the GCA quarter. Market purchases in the flex are to 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 are limited to a maximum adjustment (up or down) of \$1.00 from the initial market price.

**IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED BY THE INDIANA UTILITY REGULATORY COMMISSION that:**

1. The Verified Petition of Sycamore Gas Company, Inc. for the gas cost adjustment for natural gas service, as set forth in Paragraph No. 8, is approved, subject to refund in accordance with Paragraph No. 10.
2. Prior to implementing the GCA factors approved above or any future flexed factor, Sycamore Gas Company, Inc. shall file with the Commission under this Cause, the applicable rate schedules for the factor.
3. This Order shall be effective on and after the date of its approval.

**ATTERHOLT, BENNETT, MAYS AND ZIEGNER CONCUR; LANDIS ABSENT:**

**APPROVED: APR 24 2013**

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

  
**Brenda A. Howe,**  
**Secretary to the Commission**