

STATE OF INDIANA

INDIANA UTILITY REGULATORY COMMISSION

PETITION OF INDIANA NATURAL GAS)
CORPORATION FOR APPROVAL OF GAS COST) CAUSE NO. 37418 GCA 115
ADJUSTMENT TO BE APPLICABLE IN THE)
MONTHS OF NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2012 AND)
JANUARY 2013 PURSUANT TO IC § 8-1-2-42, PL) APPROVED:
43-1983) OCT 31 2012

ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Presiding Officers:

Kari A.E. Bennett, Commissioner
David E. Veleta, Administrative Law Judge

On August 9, 2012, in accordance with Indiana Code § 8-1-2-42, Indiana Natural Gas Corporation (“Petitioner”) filed its Petition for Gas Cost Adjustment (“GCA”) with attached Schedules to be applicable during the billing cycles of November, December 2012 and January 2013, with the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (“Commission”). On September 28, 2012, Petitioner prefiled the direct testimony and revised schedules of David A. Osmon, Petitioner’s Executive Vice President, supporting the proposed GCA factor. On October 10, 2012, in conformance with the statute, the Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (“OUCC”) filed the statistical report and direct testimony of Sherry L. Beaumont, Utility Analyst.

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 on October 18, 2012 at 1:30 p.m., in Suite 224, PNC Center, 101 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, Indiana. The Petitioner and the OUCC were present and participated. The testimony and exhibits of both Petitioner and the 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 1080 West

Hospital Road in Paoli, Indiana. Petitioner is engaged in rendering natural gas utility service to the public in Bartholomew, Brown, Crawford, Dubois, Harrison, Johnson, Lawrence and Orange 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. Indiana 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 gas supplies are currently acquired through contractual arrangements with natural gas marketers. Petitioner's Executive Vice President, David A. Osmon, testified that Petitioner has continued purchasing fixed price contracts for future periods. Petitioner also monitors its purchasing practices in an attempt to keep purchased gas costs as low as economically feasible.

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, 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. 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 cost to be reasonable. Therefore, 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 which results in the 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. 43434. The Commission's October 8, 2008 Order in that Cause authorized Petitioner to earn a net operating income of \$454,591. Petitioner's evidence indicates that for the twelve (12) months ending June 30, 2012, Petitioner's actual net operating income was \$306,268. Therefore, based on the evidence of record, the Commission finds that Petitioner is earning less than the amount authorized in its last rate case.

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 of Petitioner during the reconciliation period of April 1, 2012 through June 30, 2012 (“the Reconciliation Period”) yielded an under-estimated weighted average error of -7.86%.

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. **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 variance for the Reconciliation Period is an under-collection of \$28,155 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 \$11,459.

The variance from prior recovery periods applicable to the current recovery period is an under-collection of \$7,084. Combining this amount with the Reconciliation Period variance, results in a total under-collection of \$18,543 to be applied in this GCA as an increase 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 for November 2012 is \$302,941. Adjusting this total for the variance and refund amounts yields gas costs to be recovered through the GCA of \$309,122. The estimated net commodity cost of gas to be recovered for December 2012 is \$542,708. Adjusting this total for the variance and refund amounts yields gas costs to be recovered through the GCA of \$548,889. The estimated net commodity cost of gas to be recovered for January 2013 is \$742,496. Adjusting this total for the variance and refund amounts yields gas costs to be recovered through the GCA of \$748,677. After dividing that amount by estimated sales and adjusting for the Indiana Utility Receipts Tax, Petitioner’s recommended GCA factors are \$5.1544/Dth for November, 2012; \$5.0617/Dth for December, 2012; and \$5.0737/Dth for January, 2013.

9. **Effects on Residential Customers.** The GCA factor for November 2012 of \$5.1544/Dth represents an increase of \$0.9035/Dth from the current GCA factor of \$4.2509/Dth. The GCA factor for December 2012 of \$5.0617/Dth represents an increase of \$0.8108/Dth from the current GCA factor of \$4.2509/Dth. The GCA factor for January 2013 of \$5.0737/Dth represents an increase of \$0.8228/Dth from the current GCA factor of \$4.2509/Dth. The effects of these changes on residential customer bills at various consumption levels during the period covered by this GCA are shown below:

Table 1
Effect on Residential Customers
Proposed vs. Currently Approved GCA Factor
November 2012

Consumption <u>Dth</u>	Bill at New <u>GCA Factor</u>	Bill at Currently Approved <u>GCA Factor</u>	Dollar <u>Change</u>	Percent <u>Change</u>
5	\$ 51.21	\$ 46.70	\$ 4.51	9.66%
10	89.16	80.13	9.03	11.27%
15	127.11	113.56	13.55	11.93%
20	165.06	146.99	18.07	12.29%
25	203.01	180.43	22.58	12.51%

December 2012

Consumption <u>Dth</u>	Bill at New <u>GCA Factor</u>	Bill at Currently Approved <u>GCA Factor</u>	Dollar <u>Change</u>	Percent <u>Change</u>
5	\$ 50.75	\$ 46.70	\$ 4.05	8.67%
10	88.24	80.13	8.11	10.12%
15	125.72	113.56	12.16	10.71%
20	163.21	146.99	16.22	11.03%
25	200.70	180.43	20.27	11.23%

January 2013

Consumption <u>Dth</u>	Bill at New <u>GCA Factor</u>	Bill at Currently Approved <u>GCA Factor</u>	Dollar <u>Change</u>	Percent <u>Change</u>
5	\$ 50.81	\$ 46.70	\$ 4.11	8.80%
10	88.36	80.13	8.23	10.27%
15	125.90	113.56	12.34	10.87%
20	163.45	146.99	16.46	11.20%
25	201.00	180.43	20.57	11.40%

The GCA factor for November 2012 of \$5.1544/Dth represents a decrease of \$0.4208/Dth from the GCA factor of \$5.5752/Dth billed one year ago. The GCA factor for December 2012 of \$5.0617/Dth represents a decrease of \$0.2757/Dth from the GCA factor of \$5.3374/Dth billed one year ago. The GCA factor for January 2013 of \$5.0737/Dth represents a decrease of \$0.3859/Dth from the GCA factor of \$5.4596/Dth billed one year ago. The effects of

those changes on residential customer bills at various consumption levels during the period covered by this GCA are shown below:

Table 2
Effect on Residential Customers
New vs. One Year Ago

November 2012

Consumption <u>Dth</u>	Bill at Proposed <u>GCA Factor</u>	Bill at Prior Year Approved <u>GCA Factor</u>	Dollar <u>Change</u>	Percent <u>Change</u>
5	\$ 51.21	\$ 53.32	\$ (2.11)	-3.96%
10	89.16	93.37	(4.21)	-4.51%
15	127.11	133.42	(6.31)	-4.73%
20	165.06	173.48	(8.42)	-4.85%
25	203.01	213.54	(10.53)	-4.93%

December 2012

Consumption <u>Dth</u>	Bill at Proposed <u>GCA Factor</u>	Bill at Prior Year Approved <u>GCA Factor</u>	Dollar <u>Change</u>	Percent <u>Change</u>
5	\$ 50.75	\$ 52.13	\$ (1.38)	-2.65%
10	88.24	90.99	(2.75)	-3.02%
15	125.72	129.86	(4.14)	-3.19%
20	163.21	168.72	(5.51)	-3.27%
25	200.70	207.60	(6.90)	-3.32%

January 2013

Consumption <u>Dth</u>	Bill at Proposed <u>GCA Factor</u>	Bill at Prior Year Approved <u>GCA Factor</u>	Dollar <u>Change</u>	Percent <u>Change</u>
5	\$ 50.81	\$ 52.74	\$(1.93)	-3.66%
10	88.36	92.21	(3.85)	-4.18%
15	125.90	131.69	(5.79)	-4.40%
20	163.45	171.17	(7.72)	-4.51%
25	201.00	210.65	(9.65)	-4.58%

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.** The 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 flex mechanism each month 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. The flex is to be filed no less than three (3) 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 Petition of Indiana Natural Gas Corporation for the gas cost adjustment for natural gas service, as set forth in Finding Paragraph No. 8, shall be and hereby is approved, subject to refund in accordance with Finding Paragraph No. 10.

2. 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.

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

ATTERHOLT, BENNETT, LANDIS, MAYS AND ZIEGNER CONCUR:

APPROVED: OCT 31 2012

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



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