

ORIGINAL

STATE OF INDIANA

INDIANA UTILITY REGULATORY COMMISSION

PETITION OF AURORA MUNICIPAL GAS)
 UTILITY FOR APPROVAL OF GAS COST) CAUSE NO. 37447 GCA 116
 ADJUSTMENT TO BE APPLICABLE IN)
 THE MONTHS OF FEBRUARY, MARCH)
 AND APRIL, 2013 PURSUANT TO I.C. 8-1-2-) APPROVED:
 42, P.L. 43-1983) JAN 30 2013

ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Presiding Officers:

Carolene Mays, Commissioner

Lorraine L. Seyfried, Chief Administrative Law Judge

On December 10, 2012, in accordance with Indiana Code § 8-1-2-42, Aurora Municipal Gas Utility (“Petitioner”) filed its Verified Petition for Gas Cost Adjustment (“GCA”) with attached Schedules to be applicable during the billing cycles of February, March and April, 2013 with the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (“Commission”). A Notice of Revised Flexed GCA Factor was filed on January 15, 2013. On January 17, 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 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 commenced at 10:30 a.m. on January 23, 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 both 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 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 is a municipally owned utility as that term is defined in Ind. Code § 8-1-2-1. 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 municipal utility duly organized and existing under the laws of the State of Indiana. Petitioner has its principal office at 110 Main Street, Aurora, Indiana. Petitioner is engaged in rendering natural gas utility service to the public

in Dearborn County 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 sole supplier is Sycamore Gas Company (formerly Lawrenceburg Gas Company). Petitioner executed a ten-year agreement for the purchase of natural gas under Sycamore Gas Company's Rate WS (wholesale). This agreement is currently being renewed on a year-to-year basis. Petitioner has no physical storage facilities or access to interstate pipeline storage.

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. As mentioned above, Petitioner's sole natural gas supplier is Sycamore Gas Company, which is a local distribution company regulated by the Commission. The Commission has reviewed the cost of gas included in Sycamore Gas Company's 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.** As a municipal utility, Petitioner is not subject to the "earnings test" set forth in Indiana Code § 8-1-2-42(g)(3)(C).

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 August through October, 2012 (the "Reconciliation Period") yielded an over-estimated weighted average error of 1.62%. 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 over-collection of \$1,128 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 a decrease in the estimated net cost of gas is \$449.

The variance from prior recovery periods applicable to the current recovery period is an under-collection of \$23,015. Combining this amount with the Reconciliation Period variance, results in a total under-collection of \$22,566 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 cost of gas to be recovered during the application period is \$635,552. Adjusting this total for the variance and refund amounts yields gas costs to be recovered through the GCA of \$658,118. After dividing that amount by estimated sales and adjusting for Indiana Utility Receipts Tax, Petitioner's recommended GCA factors are \$6.3460/Dth for February 2013, \$6.6121/Dth for March 2013 and \$7.3705/Dth for April 2013.

9. Effects on Residential Customers. The GCA factor for February 2013 of \$6.3460/Dth represents a decrease of \$0.3480/Dth from the current (December 2012) GCA factor of \$6.6940/Dth.¹ The GCA factor for March 2013 of \$6.6121/Dth represents a decrease of \$0.0819/Dth from the current (December 2012) GCA factor of \$6.6940/Dth. The GCA factor for April 2013 of \$7.3705/Dth represents an increase of \$0.6765/Dth from the current (December 2012) GCA factor of \$6.6940/Dth. The effects of these changes, in addition to changes from Petitioner's base rates and any applicable rate adjustment mechanisms,² are shown in the following table for various consumption levels of residential bills:

¹ It is the preference of the Commission to use the GCA factor for the month the petition was initially filed for all comparisons.

² Because changes in other bill rate adjustment mechanisms may exceed the change in the GCA factor, any increase or decrease in the GCA factor may not necessarily result in an increase or decrease in the total bill.

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

February 2013

<i>Monthly Consumption Dth</i>	<i>Bill at New GCA Factor</i>	<i>Bill at Current GCA Factor</i>	<i>Dollar Change</i>	<i>Percent Change</i>
5	\$ 45.87	\$ 47.61	\$ (1.74)	-3.65%
10	88.26	91.74	(3.48)	-3.79%
15	130.64	135.86	(5.22)	-3.84%
20	173.03	179.99	(6.96)	-3.87%
25	215.41	224.11	(8.70)	-3.88%

March 2013

<i>Monthly Consumption Dth</i>	<i>Bill at New GCA Factor</i>	<i>Bill at Current GCA Factor</i>	<i>Dollar Change</i>	<i>Percent Change</i>
5	\$ 47.20	\$ 47.61	\$ (0.41)	-0.86%
10	90.92	91.74	(0.82)	-0.89%
15	134.63	135.86	(1.23)	-0.90%
20	178.35	179.99	(1.64)	-0.91%
25	222.07	224.11	(2.04)	-0.91%

April 2013

<i>Monthly Consumption Dth</i>	<i>Bill at New GCA Factor</i>	<i>Bill at Current GCA Factor</i>	<i>Dollar Change</i>	<i>Percent Change</i>
5	\$ 50.99	\$ 47.61	\$ 3.38	7.10%
10	98.50	91.74	6.76	7.37%
15	146.01	135.86	10.15	7.47%
20	193.52	179.99	13.53	7.52%
25	241.02	224.11	16.91	7.55%

The GCA factor for February 2013 of \$6.3460/Dth represents an increase of \$0.0565/Dth from the GCA factor of \$6.2895/Dth billed one year ago (February 2012). The GCA factor for March 2013 of \$6.6121/Dth represents a decrease of \$0.2030/Dth from the GCA factor of \$6.8151/Dth billed one year ago (March 2012). The GCA factor for April 2013 of \$7.3705/Dth represents an increase of \$1.3505/Dth from the GCA factor of \$6.0200/Dth billed one year ago (April 2012). The effects of these changes, in addition to changes from Petitioner's base rates and any applicable rate adjustment mechanisms,³ are shown in the following table for various consumption levels of residential bills:

³ Because changes in other bill rate adjustment mechanisms may exceed the change in the GCA factor, any increase or decrease in the GCA factor may not necessarily result in an increase or decrease in the total bill.

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

February 2013

<i>Monthly Consumption Dth</i>	<i>Bill at New GCA Factor</i>	<i>Bill at Prior Yr GCA Factor</i>	<i>Dollar Change</i>	<i>Percent Change</i>
5	\$ 45.87	\$ 45.59	\$ 0.28	0.62%
10	88.26	87.69	0.57	0.64%
15	130.64	129.79	0.85	0.65%
20	173.03	171.90	1.13	0.66%
25	215.41	214.00	1.41	0.66%

March 2013

<i>Monthly Consumption Dth</i>	<i>Bill at New GCA Factor</i>	<i>Bill at Prior Yr GCA Factor</i>	<i>Dollar Change</i>	<i>Percent Change</i>
5	\$ 47.20	\$ 48.22	\$ (1.02)	-2.10%
10	90.92	92.95	(2.03)	-2.18%
15	134.63	137.68	(3.05)	-2.21%
20	178.35	182.41	(4.06)	-2.23%
25	222.07	227.14	(5.07)	-2.23%

April 2013

<i>Monthly Consumption Dth</i>	<i>Bill at New GCA Factor</i>	<i>Bill at Prior Yr GCA Factor</i>	<i>Dollar Change</i>	<i>Percent Change</i>
5	\$ 50.99	\$ 44.24	\$ 6.75	15.26%
10	98.50	85.00	13.50	15.89%
15	146.01	125.75	20.26	16.11%
20	193.52	166.51	27.01	16.22%
25	241.02	207.27	33.75	16.28%

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 utilizes 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.

This Commission has indicated in prior orders that Indiana's gas utilities should make reasonable efforts to mitigate gas price volatility. Petitioner's monthly flex mechanism is designed to address the Commission's concerns. Therefore, Petitioner may utilize a monthly flex mechanism.

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

1. The Verified Petition of Aurora Municipal Gas Utility 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. Aurora Municipal Gas Utility 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. In accordance with Indiana Code § 8-1-2-70, Petitioner shall pay the following itemized charges within twenty days from the date of the Order into the Treasury of the State of Indiana, through the Secretary of this Commission, as well as any additional costs that were incurred in connection with this Cause:

Commission Charges:	\$373.42
OUCC Charges:	\$253.79
Legal Advertising Charges:	<u>\$111.32</u>
Total:	\$738.53

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

ATTERHOLT, BENNETT, LANDIS, MAYS AND ZIEGNER CONCUR:

APPROVED: **JAN 30 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