



April 27, 2022

VIA E-File

Secretary Rosemary Chiavetta
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Commonwealth Keystone Building
400 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120

**Re: Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission v. Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc.
Docket No. R-2022-3031211**

Prehearing Memorandum of CAUSE-PA

Dear Secretary Chiavetta:

Please find the attached **Prehearing Memorandum of the Coalition for Affordable Utility Services and Energy Efficiency in Pennsylvania (CAUSE-PA)** in the above noted proceeding.

As indicated on the attached Certificate of Service, service on the parties was accomplished by email only.

Respectfully Submitted,



John W. Sweet, Esq.
Counsel for CAUSE-PA

CC: Certificate of Service

BEFORE THE PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission	:	
	:	
v.	:	Docket No. R-2022-3031211
	:	
Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc.	:	

**PREHEARING MEMORANDUM
OF THE COALITION FOR AFFORDABLE UTILITY SERVICES
AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN PENNSYLVANIA**

On April 20, 2022, Deputy Chief Administrative Law Judge Christopher P. Pell issued a Prehearing Conference Order setting a telephonic prehearing conference for Friday, April 29, 2022, at 9:00 a.m., and requiring parties to file a Prehearing Memorandum no later than 12:00 pm on Wednesday, April 27, 2022. In response, the Coalition for Affordable Utility Services and Energy Efficiency in Pennsylvania (“CAUSE-PA”), through its counsel at the Pennsylvania Utility Law Project, hereby files this Prehearing Conference Memorandum.

I. Background

On March 18, 2022, Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc. (Columbia), filed Supplement No. 337 to Tariff Gas Pa. P.U.C. No. 9 to become effective May 17, 2022, containing proposed changes in rates, rules, and regulations calculated to produce \$82.2 million in additional annual revenues. Under the proposed increase, the total bill for a residential customer who purchases 70 therms of gas from Columbia per month, would increase from \$123.24 to \$135.67 per month, or by 10.09%.

On April 12, 2022, CAUSE-PA filed a Petition to Intervene, requesting full intervenor status as an active party to the proceeding.

On April 14, 2022, the Commission entered a Suspension and Investigation Order suspending the Columbia tariff by operation of law, and opening an investigation to determine the lawfulness, justness, and reasonableness of the rates, rules, and regulations contained therein. (S&I Order).

II. Issues to be Presented

In addition to compliance with sound rate making principles, including the requirement that rates be just and reasonable, Columbia must also ensure that its rates and tariff comply with universal service requirements. See 66 Pa. C.S. § 2203(8). In determining whether rates are just and reasonable, the Commission must examine whether rates are affordable and accessible.

If the Commission approves any natural gas distribution rate increase, it should condition approval on Columbia's agreement to perform such actions as are necessary to assure compliance with applicable sections of the Public Utility Code, Commission regulations and guidelines, and settlement agreements.

CAUSE-PA has conducted an initial review of Columbia's proposed tariff changes and testimony, and opposes Columbia's request on the grounds that the proposed rate increase and tariff changes may result in unjust and unreasonable rates that would impose severe hardship on low and moderate income residential customers. CAUSE-PA identifies the following specific issues of concern, which must be addressed in this proceeding, though it reserves the right to raise additional issues which may arise through the course of this proceeding:

- i. The conformity to law and the effect of Columbia's rate filing and proposed rate increase on low income households.
- ii. The effect of Columbia's proposed increase to its fixed residential customer charge on low income households, and the ability to achieve appreciable bill savings through adoption of energy efficiency measures.
- iii. The effect of Columbia's rate filing and proposed rate increase on low income households enrolled in or eligible for Columbia's Universal Service Programs, and the continued adequacy of those programs in delivering universally accessible natural gas service.

III. Witnesses and Testimony

CAUSE-PA intends to present the following witness to testify in this matter, and reserves the right to call additional witnesses as may be warranted upon proper notice to Your Honor and the parties:

Harry S. Geller, Esq.
118 Locust Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
hgeller@pautilitylawproject.org

Mr. Geller will address the issues identified above, as well as other issues that may arise in the course of this proceeding.

IV. Discovery

CAUSE-PA supports the discovery modifications requested by the Office of Consumer Advocate (OCA) in its Prehearing Memorandum.

V. Settlement

CAUSE-PA is willing and ready to engage in settlement discussions in an attempt to resolve or narrow the issues in this proceeding, with any and all parties, and encourages the parties to engage in settlement early in the process.

VI. Service on CAUSE-PA

CAUSE-PA is represented by the attorneys at the Pennsylvania Utility Law Project. All documents should be served on CAUSE-PA as follows:

John W. Sweet, Esq., PA ID: 320182
Ria M. Pereira, Esq., PA ID: 316771
Lauren N. Berman, Esq., PA ID: 310116
Elizabeth R. Marx, Esq., PA ID: 309014
PENNSYLVANIA UTILITY LAW PROJECT
118 Locust Street
Harrisburg, PA 17102
Telephone: 717-236-9486
Facsimile: 717-233-4088
E-mail: pulp@pautilitylawproject.org

CAUSE-PA requests that the parties agree to accept electronic service in this proceeding.

VII. Representation of CAUSE-PA at Prehearing Conference

For the purposes of the Prehearing Conference, CAUSE-PA will be represented by John W. Sweet, Esq.

VIII. Litigation Schedule

CAUSE-PA is involved in discussions with Columbia and other parties to reach a mutually agreeable litigation schedule.

WHEREFORE, CAUSE-PA respectfully submits this Prehearing Conference Memorandum.

Respectfully submitted,

PENNSYLVANIA UTILITY LAW PROJECT
Counsel for CAUSE-PA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John W. Sweet", is written over a horizontal line.

John W. Sweet, Esq., PA ID: 320182
Ria M. Pereira, Esq., PA ID: 316771
Lauren N. Berman, Esq., PA ID: 310116
Elizabeth R. Marx, Esq., PA ID: 309014
118 Locust Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
Tel.: 717-236-9486
Fax: 717-233-4088
pulp@putilitylawproject.org

Date: April 27, 2022

BEFORE THE PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission	:	
	:	
v.	:	Docket No. R-2022-3031211
	:	
Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc.	:	

Certificate of Service

I hereby certify that I have this day served copies of the **Prehearing Memorandum of the Coalition for Affordable Utility Services and Energy Efficiency in Pennsylvania** upon the parties of record in the above captioned proceeding in accordance with the requirements of 52 Pa. Code § 1.54.

VIA Email

Amy E. Hirakis, Esq.
Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc.
800 North 3rd Street, Suite 204
Harrisburg, PA 17102
ahirakis@nisource.com

Michael W. Hassell, Esq.
Lindsay A Berkstresser, Esq.
Post & Schell, PC
17 North Second Street, 12th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101
mhassell@postschell.com
lberkstresser@postschell.com

Erika McLain, Esq.
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement
Commonwealth Keystone Building
400 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120
ermclain@pa.gov

Steven C. Gray, Esq.
Office of Small Business Advocate
300 North Second Street
Suite 202
Harrisburg, PA 17101
sgray@pa.gov

Aron Beatty, Esq.
Barrett C. Sheridan, Esq.
Harrison W. Breitman, Esq.
Lauren E. Guerra, Esq.
Office of Consumer Advocate
555 Walnut Street
5th Floor Forum Place
Harrisburg, PA 17101-1923
ABeatty@paoca.org
BSheridan@paoca.org
HBreitman@paoca.org
LGuerra@paoca.org

Thomas J. Sniscak
Whitney E. Snyder
Phillip D. Demanchick, Jr.
Hawke McKeon & Sniscak LLP
100 North 10th Street
Harrisburg, PA 17105
tjsniscak@hmslegal.com
wesnyder@hmslegal.com
pddemanchick@hmslegal.com

Joseph L Vullo, Esq.
Burke Vullo Reilly Roberts
1460 Wyoming Avenue
Forty Fort, PA 18704
jlvullo@bvrrlaw.com

Constance Wile
922 Bebout Rd
Venetia, PA 15367
cjazdrmr@yahoo.com

Todd S. Stewart, Esquire
Hawke McKeon & Sniscak, LLP
100 N. Tenth Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
tsstewart@hmslegal.com

Jose A. Serrano
2667 Chadbourne Dr.
York, PA 17404
Jas673@hotmail.com

The Honorable Christopher P. Pell
Deputy Chief Administrative Law Judge
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
801 Market Street, Suite 4063
Philadelphia, PA 19107
cpell@pa.gov

Respectfully Submitted,
PENNSYLVANIA UTILITY LAW PROJECT
Counsel for CAUSE-PA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John W. Sweet", with a horizontal line above it.

John W. Sweet, Esq., PA ID: 320182
118 Locust Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
717-710-3839
pulp@pautilitylawproject.org

April 27, 2022