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PA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
SECRETARY'S BUREAU

September 28, 2009

Special Agent Eranda Vero
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Post Office Box 3265
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265

RE: Vance Van Patten v. The Peoples Natural Gas Company
Docket No.: C-2009-2101138

Dear Special Agent Vero:

Pursuant to your instructions following the telephonic hearing of September 10, 2009, this is to be considered my objection(s) to information/evidence submitted by The Peoples Natural Gas Company dated September 11, 2009.

In the communication dated September 11, 2009 from Mr. William Roberts, Mr. Roberts directs your attention to "Commission precedent that dismisses a claim that an alleged failure by the utility to timely pursue termination and/or collection should bar such collections." Mr. Roberts further states that I "asserted a similar claim in the telephonic hearing."

In order to clarify my position, and to prevent said position from being clouded by the irrelevant admission of post-hearing evidence by The Peoples Natural Gas Company, at no time during this hearing did I state or allude to the fact that The Peoples Natural Gas Company should be barred from "timely termination and/or collections."

My position is that The Peoples Natural Gas Company failed to follow their own standard procedures to pursue "timely termination and/or collections" for a period of approximately four (4) years. It is my position that, prior to September, 2003 until November 26, 2007, there were efforts to terminate or collect as evidenced by The Peoples Natural Gas Company's Exhibit A - Account Statement.

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It is further my position that because The Peoples Natural Gas Company failed to follow its own standard operating procedures regarding delinquent accounts, The Peoples Natural Gas Company contributed to my account balance getting so out of control. As testified to by Ms. Terry Richey, standard procedure is to begin termination once a customer's account reaches either a specified number of days or a specified dollar amount in arrears. In my case, these procedures were not followed until June 17, 2008, when my service was terminated for "non-payment" as evidenced by The Peoples Exhibit A – Account Statement.

Again, I would like to emphasize that had The Peoples Natural Gas Company followed its own standard procedures, in my opinion, this account would not have been allowed to reach this extreme amount of arrearages.

My position during the telephonic hearing is and has been that The Peoples Natural Gas Company, by failing to follow standard operating procedures, contributed to this account getting so out of hand. It is also my position that I accept responsibility for not being able to meet the financial agreements of previous re-payment agreements. I accept responsibility that I have not had the financial resources to make monthly payments of up to \$550.00 per month, as was the last agreement with The Peoples Natural Gas Company. It is my position that The Peoples Natural Gas Company should accept responsibility for its failure to follow operating procedures. It is my position that The Peoples Natural Gas Company should be willing to work out a re-payment plan that I can afford and will allow them to collect all monies due them. Instead, The Peoples Natural Gas Company, knowing that it is the only source for natural gas supply in my area, took the position that they can make unrealistic demands and dictate unaffordable re-payment plans on customers and terminate service if said demands are not met.

Because of its position as the only supplier of natural gas in my area, The Peoples Natural Gas Company put me into the position of feeling that I had no choice but to accept their demands, as testified to by myself during the past PUC hearing, wherein Mr. Roberts was informed that I did not think I would be able to make the monthly payments, because of my financial situation, but that I would do the best that I could.

It should be noted that every effort has been made to make the monthly payments dictated by The Peoples Natural Gas Company. It should also be noted that I attempted to negotiate and make payments in good faith as evidenced by the fact that the total amount due has been reduced by almost half over the past year. However, it is my opinion that The Peoples Natural Gas Company utilized its position, as the sole source of natural gas in this area, to avoid making any kind of allowance for financial difficulties being experienced these days due to ever-changing unstable economic climate.

I would like to remind you that the September 10, 2009 hearing was due to my request/formal complaint that the Pennsylvania Public Utility intervenes for the purpose of providing me with a financially reasonable repayment plan whereby this debt can be paid and bankruptcy can be avoided.

Finally, I would like to remind you that this account was allowed to accumulate for a period of at least four (4) years. I would hope that you would find it reasonable that a repayment plan should be at least this long. As you are aware, this situation has escalated to this point due to the fact that The Peoples Natural Gas Company has forced me to accept re-payment plans that I could not afford. Without a re-payment plan that I can financially expect to maintain, this situation will only be resolved by bankruptcy or the permanent termination of service.

Respectfully submitted)



Vance Van Patten