



**Philadelphia Gas Works**

800 West Montgomery Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19122

Danielle Ross, Paralegal

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January 24, 2011

Rosemary Chiavetta, Secretary  
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission  
P.O. Box 3265  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265

**Re: Marvin Black v. PGW, Docket No. C – 2011 – 2218474**

Dear Secretary Chiavetta:

Pursuant to 52 Pa. Code §5.61, the Philadelphia Gas Works ("PGW") hereby files the original of its Preliminary Objections to the Complaint in the above captioned matter.

If additional information is required, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned. Thank you for your assistance in the matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Danielle Ross".

Danielle Ross

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Marvin Black  
Anne Marie Cromley (PGW Mail)  
Linda Pereira (PGW Mail)

**BEFORE THE  
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

**Marvin Black**

v.

**Philadelphia Gas Works**

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**Docket No. C – 2011 – 2218474**

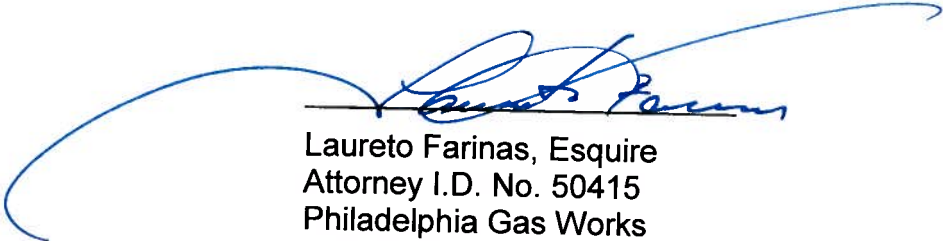
**NOTICE TO PLEAD**

**To: Marvin Black, Complainant**

Pursuant to 52 Pa. Code §5.101, you are hereby notified to file a written response to the enclosed Preliminary Objections and Motion to Strike, within ten (10) days from service hereof or you may be deemed to be in default and relevant facts stated in these pleadings may be deemed admitted and a judgment may be entered against you.

Respectfully submitted,

January 24, 2011



Laureto Farinas, Esquire  
Attorney I.D. No. 50415  
Philadelphia Gas Works  
800 W. Montgomery Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19122  
(215) 684-6982

**BEFORE THE  
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

**Marvin Black**

v.

**Philadelphia Gas Works**

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**Docket No. C – 2011 – 2218474**

**Philadelphia Gas Works’  
Preliminary Objections and  
Motion to Strike Impertinent Matter**

Pursuant to 52 Pa. Code §5.101, the Philadelphia Gas Works (“PGW”) hereby files its Preliminary Objections to the Complaint filed in the above captioned matter on the grounds that the Commission lacks jurisdiction over the subject matter of the Complaint, and that the Complaint includes impertinent matter in its requested relief to remove (or forbear collection of) the lien, and moves to strike the requested relief as “impertinent matter” pursuant to 52 Pa. Code §§5.101(a)(1) and (2).

In support of its preliminary objection and motion to strike, PGW hereby avers the following:

1. On or about December 29, 2010, the Complainant filed a formal complaint against PGW with the Commission under the above captioned matter, regarding unpaid debt for gas service to 1541 Belfield Avenue and 1545 Belfield Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Subject Properties).
2. The Complainant avers that he was never made aware that his tenants at the Subject Properties were delinquent in paying for gas service.
3. For the following periods, the Complainant’s tenants owed \$2,695.80 for unpaid gas service to the Subject Properties under accounts where the Complainant’s commercial tenants were the Customers of Record.

Address	Account No.	Service Dates	Customer	Balance
1541 Belfield Ave	71-1401-7165	11/26/03 through 06/27/07	Antoinette Freeman	\$537.73

1545 Belfield Ave	31-1236-9078	01/19/94 through 06/27/97	Michael Rogers	\$1,675.11
1545 Belfield Ave	07-3966-5232	12/05/02 through 03/18/04	The Car Alarm Shop	\$482.96

4. The City of Philadelphia, as owner of PGW, has filed a municipal lien upon the Subject Property for the unpaid debt for gas service to the Subject Properties on the accounts of the Complainant's tenants, pursuant to the Municipal Claim and Tax Lien Law, Act 153 of 1923, P.L. 207 53 P.S. §7101, et seq. (Municipal Lien Act), Under the Municipal Lien Act, the City of Philadelphia as owner of PGW has the right to collect on municipal claims owed to PGW for gas service to a Service Address.

5. The Complaint requests relief in the form of a Commission order to PGW to remove the lien against the Subject Properties.

6. Under the Commission's Rules of Administrative Practice and Procedure at 52 Pa. Code §5.101, the treatment of preliminary objections is comparable to that of Pennsylvania civil practice. (See: Order Sustaining Preliminary Objection in *Paul W. Fricker v. PECO Energy Company*, Docket No. C-2009-2094757 (May 21, 2009))

The Commission's regulations provide, in relevant part:

(a) *Grounds.* Preliminary objections are available to parties and may be filed in response to a pleading except motions and prior preliminary objections. Preliminary objections...must state specifically the legal and factual grounds relied upon and be limited to the following:

(1) Lack of Commission jurisdiction or improper service of the pleading initiating the proceeding.

(2) Failure of a pleading to conform to this chapter or the inclusion of scandalous or impertinent matter.

52 Pa. Code §5.101(a) (2)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 52 Pa. Code §5.101(a) (2) emphasis added.

7. In this case, as the Complaint states that the bills that are the subject of the liens were from gas service under the accounts of his tenants. The Complainant opines that under circumstances, he should not be held responsible.

8. Pursuant to the Natural Gas Choice and Competition Act, 66 Pa. C.S.A Section 2201 et seq., section 2212(n), which specifically provides, "Nothing contained in this title shall abrogate the power of a city natural gas distribution operation to collect delinquent receivables through the imposition of liens pursuant to section 3 of the act of May 16, 1923 (P.L. 207, No. 153), referred to as the Municipal Claim and Tax Lien Law, or otherwise." Thus, under 66 Pa. C.S.A Section 2212(n), the Commission has no jurisdiction over the filing of such a lien.<sup>2</sup> *Nathaniel Lewis Mooney v. PGW*, Docket No. C-2009-2134673 (Final Decision and Order entered January 13, 2010)

9. Pursuant to the Responsible Utility Customer Protection Act at 66 Pa. Cons. Stat. § 1414, which states: "[a] city natural gas distribution operation furnishing gas service to a property is entitled to impose or assess a municipal claim against the property and file as liens of record claims for unpaid natural gas distribution service and other related costs, including natural gas supply ...," clarifies and confirms such rights to impose a lien.

10. The Complainant disputes the imposition of the lien because he did not incur the debt for gas service.

11. The nature of a lien is such that it encumbers the real estate, regardless who caused the event, which results in the imposition of a municipal claim. PGW may collect as a municipal claim, unpaid debt for gas service rendered, even when the gas service was not rendered to the owner of the property. *Newberry Township v. Ray Stambaugh*, 848 A.2d 173; (Pa. Cmwlth. 2000)

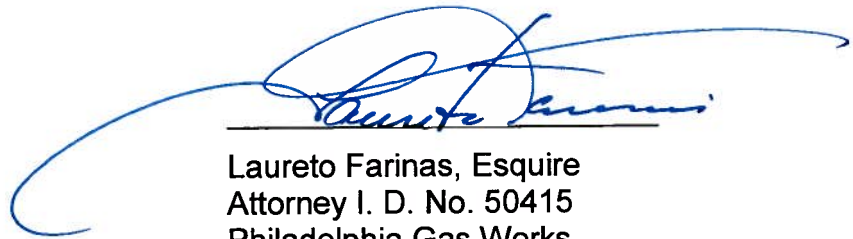
12. In the instant matter, the Complainant simply wishes his properties to not be held responsible for the gas the Complainant did not use and for the Commission to order the removal of the lien.

13. As the Commission is without jurisdiction to decide on matters involving the imposition of the municipal lien, the Complainant's request for relief is "impertinent matter" within the use and meaning of 52 Pa. Code §5.101(a) (2) and, should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Pa. Code §5.101(a)(2).

**Wherefore**, PGW respectfully requests that this Commission sustain PGW's preliminary objections to the Complaint and dismiss the Complaint for lack of jurisdiction and strike off the requested relief as impertinent matter.

Respectfully submitted,

January 24, 2011



Laureto Farinas, Esquire  
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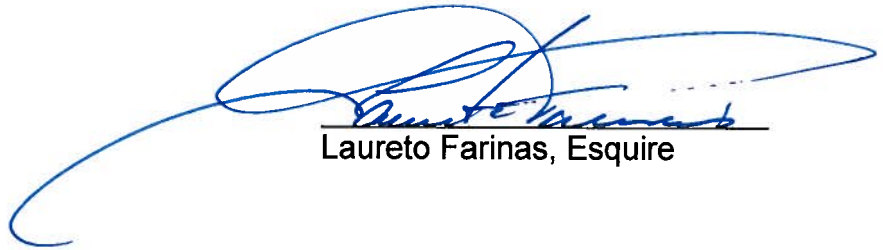
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<sup>2</sup> 52 Pa. Code §5.101(a) (1)

**VERIFICATION**

I, Laureto Farinas, hereby declare that I am counsel for the Philadelphia Gas Works. I am authorized to make this verification on its behalf. The facts set forth in the foregoing Answer are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I expect to be able to prove these facts at a hearing held in this matter. This verification is made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa. C.S. §4904, concerning false statements to authorities.

January 24, 2011



Laureto Farinas  
Laureto Farinas, Esquire

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I HAVE THIS DAY SERVED A TRUE COPY OF THE FOREGOING DOCUMENT UPON THE PARTICIPANTS LISTED BELOW, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF 52 PA CODE §1.54 (RELATING TO SERVICE BY A PARTICIPANT).

For Complainant:

Mr. Marvin Black  
75 McFadden Drive  
Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006

January 24, 2011



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800 W. Montgomery Avenue  
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