

**PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**  
**Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120**

**Nia Peterson**  
v.  
**Philadelphia Gas Works**

**Public Meeting – January 27, 2012**  
**2215379-ALJ**  
**F-2010-2215379**

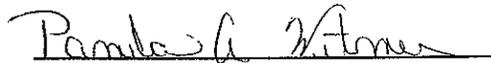
**STATEMENT OF**  
**COMMISSIONER PAMELA A. WITMER**

Before the Public Utility Commission (Commission) today is the Initial Decision disposing of the Complaint of Nia Peterson against Philadelphia Gas Works (PGW). In her Complaint, Ms. Peterson alleged and the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) found that PGW violated Section 1501 of the Public Utility Code by failing to notice that Ms. Peterson's automated meter reading device (AMR) was malfunctioning after it reported zero readings for fifteen (15) consecutive months.<sup>1</sup> I agree with the ALJ's disposition of the Complaint and I, therefore, vote to affirm the Initial Decision in this proceeding.

Notwithstanding, I am extremely troubled by the ALJ's findings in this proceeding regarding PGW's lack of diligence in investigating and correcting situations where AMRs consistently record zero readings. As explained more fully in the Initial Decision, PGW previously had a program that automatically generated and distributed letters to customers after three consecutive zero readings, but this program has not been in place since 2009. Currently, PGW addresses zero readings by placing this information on an "exception list" that PGW reviews and investigates depending on the availability of manpower and opportunity. I fully concur with the ALJ that "[t]he knowledge that for the last two or three years, [PGW] has addressed the problem of zero readings by simply entering them in a list and by leaving their repair to little more chance, is disturbing."

While PGW has stated that it is in the process of establishing a new program to address instances of zero readings, PGW was unable to provide a timeframe for when the new program will be set in place and was unable to elaborate on specifics of how this new program will improve on either past or present internal practices with regard to zero readings. Considering the current financial condition of PGW and the status of its infrastructure, I strongly encourage PGW to use the information that it has readily available to actively pursue every opportunity to investigate and correct zero readings in a timely manner. Doing so will afford PGW the opportunity to bill customers like Ms. Peterson for consumed gas in a timely fashion, rather than waiting over a year until PGW literally stumbles upon a problem.

**DATE: January 27, 2012**

  
**PAMELA A. WITMER**  
**COMMISSIONER**

<sup>1</sup> Notably, PGW only discovered that Ms. Peterson's AMR was malfunctioning when an employee was investigating a gas leak reported by a neighbor.