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June 28, 2012

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

Re: SBG Management Services Inc.-Colonial Garden Realty v. PGW,
Docket No. C – 2012 – 2308469

Dear Secretary Chiavetta:

Pursuant to 52 Pa. Code §5.101, 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,


Danielle Ross

Enclosure

cc: SBG Management Services, Inc. (Regular Mail)
Daniel D. McCaffery, Esq. (Regular Mail)
Anne Marie Cromley (PGW Mail)
Linda Pereira (PGW Mail)

**BEFORE THE
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

**SBG Management Services Inc.
Colonial Garden Realty, LP**

v.

Philadelphia Gas Works

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:
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:
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Docket No. C – 2012 – 2308469

NOTICE TO PLEAD

To: SBG Management Services Inc, Complainant

Pursuant to 52 Pa. Code §5.101, you are hereby notified to file a written response to the enclosed Supplemental Information regarding PGW's Preliminary Objection 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,

June 28, 2012



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**

SBG Management Services Inc.	:	
Colonial Garden Realty, LP	:	
	:	
v.	:	Docket No. C – 2012 – 2308469
	:	
Philadelphia Gas Works	:	

**Philadelphia Gas Works
Preliminary Objections and Motion to Strike**

Pursuant to 52 Pa. Code §5.101, the Philadelphia Gas Works (“PGW”) hereby files its Preliminary Objection to the Complaint filed in the above captioned matter on the grounds that the Commission is without jurisdiction to the subject matter of the complaint to the extent that complaint concerns acts performed under the Municipal Claim and Tax Lien Law, Act 153 of 1923, P.L. 207 53 P.S. §7101, et seq., that the Complainant appears to lack standing to bring this dispute, and that the Complaint includes impertinent matter in its requested relief and therefore moves to strike the Complainant’s request for relief.

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

1. On or about June 8, 2012, the Complainant filed a formal complaint against PGW with the Commission under the above captioned matter, regarding liens filed associated with properties managed by Colonial Garden Realty LP for gas service at 5425 – 7 Wayne Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Subject Property). The account in dispute in this matter is also among the accounts in dispute in *SBG v. Philadelphia Gas Work*, Docket No. C-2012-2304183, which is scheduled for an Initial Hearing before Administrative Law Judge Eranda Vero on August 16, 2012.

2. The Complaint disputes billed amounts associated with liens filed with the Court of Common Pleas, Philadelphia County. The Complaint

references that PGW has wrongfully encumbered the Subject Property. This involved unpaid bills for gas services associated with the accounts, as shown on the listing, which are the subject of this Complaint under the above captioned matter, which is attached hereto as Appendix 1.

3. The City of Philadelphia, as owner of PGW, has filed municipal liens upon the Subject Properties for the unpaid debt for gas service on the account of the customer or record, 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).

4. 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 Complainant requests relief in the form of a refund and or credit for all overpayments made to PGW and adjustments for excessive penalties and interest erroneously assessed on the disputed account.

6. The Complainant is not the customer of record on the PGW Account disputed in this Complaint. The customer of records is Colonial Garden Realty, LP. (See Appendix 1)

7. PGW is uncertain on the relationship of Colonial Garden Realty, LP to the Complainant. To this extent, it appears that the Complainant seeks to dispute the accuracy of bills and account balances where the Complainant was not the customer of record on the disputed account.

8. PGW has not transferred the amounts that are associated with the account of Colonial Garden Realty, LP to any accounts for which the Complainant is the customer of record.

9. 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.¹

10. The Commission has repeatedly recognized its lack of subject matter jurisdiction in cases involving a dispute over a municipal lien placed upon a property. *Cornelia Strowder v. Philadelphia Gas Works*, 2002 WL 32069511 (2002), *Debra Williams Lawrence v. Philadelphia Gas Works*, Docket Number C-20066672 (Final Order entered January 22, 2007), *Tina L. Francis-Young v. Philadelphia Gas Works*, Docket Number C-2008-2029672, (Final Order entered February 23, 2009), *Dung Phat, LLC v. Philadelphia Gas Works*, Docket Number C-2009-2135667, (Final Order entered January 13, 2010), *Nathaniel Lewis Mooney v. PGW*, Docket No. C-2009-2134673, (Final Opinion and Order entered January 13, 2010), *David Golan v. Philadelphia Gas Works*, Docket Number C-2009-2138115, (Final Order entered February 4, 2010), *2020 West Passyunk Avenue Inc. v. Philadelphia Gas Works*, Docket Number C-2009-2138727, (Final Order entered February 4, 2010), *Jean Charles v. Philadelphia Gas Works*, Docket Number C-2009-2138638, (Final Order entered February 5, 2010), *Agron Vata v. Philadelphia Gas Works*, Docket No. C-2009-2149960 (Final Order entered August 24, 2010), *William Petravich v. Philadelphia Gas Works*, Docket No. C-2010-2188984, (Final Opinion and Order entered February 10, 2011), *Avner and Gail Yamin v. Philadelphia Gas Works*, Docket No. C-2011-2221883, (Final Order entered June 29, 2011), *Ardelle Jackson v. Philadelphia Gas Works*, Docket No. C-2009-2119940 (Final Opinion and Order entered July 1, 2011) *Faye Payne v. Philadelphia Gas Works*, Docket No. C-2011-2247124 (Order entered February 16, 2012) *Larry and Gail Newman v. Philadelphia Gas Works*, C-2011-2273565 (Final Opinion and Order issued March 29, 2012)

11. 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

¹ 52 Pa. Code §5.101(a)

distribution service and other related costs, including natural gas supply ...,” clarifies and confirms such rights to impose a lien.

12. 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.

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....
 - (5) Lack of capacity to sue...
- 52 Pa. Code §5.101(a)²

13. The account, which is the subject of this complaint, is associated with a municipal lien. To the extent that the Complainant seeks to fight the satisfaction of the municipal lien, the dispute of the account of this matter is merely collateral attacks on the authority to lien under the Municipal Lien Act. *Faye Payne v. Philadelphia Gas Works, Docket No. C-2011-2247124 (Order entered February 16, 2012) and Larry and Gail Newman v. Philadelphia Gas Works, C-2011-2273565 (Final Opinion and Order issued March 29, 2012)*

14. The Complainant lacks the ability to prosecute disputes of the accuracy of bills under the accounts of another entity, as it has no knowledge of the trends of gas use for that entity, the amount and timeliness of payments made on the account, and the assessment of late payment charges for unpaid balances. To the extent that the Complainant was not (and is not) the customer or record for the account which is the basis of the municipal liens that are the

² 52 Pa. Code §5.101(a).

subject of this Complaint, the Complainant lacks standing to bring the dispute on the accuracy of the PGW bills and billing practices. *Faye Payne v. Philadelphia Gas Works*, Docket No. C-2011-2247124 (Order entered February 16, 2012); *Larry and Gail Newman v. Philadelphia Gas Works*, C-2011-2273565 (Final Opinion and Order issued March 29, 2012)

15. As the Commission is without jurisdiction to decide on matters involving the imposition of the municipal lien, and since the Complaint is merely a collateral attack on the authority of the City of Philadelphia to collect unpaid gas bills by filing liens, the Complainant's request for relief to modify the balances of the account is "impertinent matter" within the use and meaning of 52 Pa. Code §5.101(a) (2) and, should be stricken from the Complaint.³

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

Respectfully submitted,

June 28, 2012



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³ 52 Pa. Code §5.101(a) (2)

Appendix 1

**SBG - Colonial Garden Reality LP
C-2012-2308469**

PGW ACCOUNT #	CCP. DOCKET #	Customer of Record NAME	Disputed Lien Amount	DATES OF SERVICE	Bills Based Upon Actual Meter Read Yes/No	Disputed period more than 4 years	Lien Status
161-2800-0245	120130680	Colonial Garden (M1)	\$1,942.52	11/2/11 thru 1/4/12	yes		

CCP.- Common Pleas Court of Philadelphia County Docket Number for Lien filing
Lien Status- S- Satisfied, V- Vacated, U- Unsatisfied

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.

June 28, 2012



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:

SBG Management Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 549
Abington, PA 19001

Daniel D. McCaffery, Esq.
101 Greenwood Avenue, 5th Floor
Jenkintown, PA 19046

June 28, 2012



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