

**PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120**

**Emory Blackshir
v.
PECO Energy Company**

**Public Meeting: November 14,
2013
2335357-OSA
Docket C-2012-2335357**

**JOINT STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN ROBERT F. POWELSON AND
COMMISSIONER PAMELA A. WITMER**

Before the Commission today are the Exceptions of Emory Blackshir (Mr. Blackshir or Complainant) to the Initial Decision dismissing his Formal Complaint filed against PECO Energy Company (PECO or the Company). As of the date of PECO's answer, Mr. Blackshir's account balance stood at \$19,822.44, with almost \$2,800 in late payment charges alone. Simply put, PECO should not have allowed the Complainant to accrue such an enormous balance. Doing so places an unreasonable burden on other utility customers who will be responsible for this balance if the Complainant fails to pay it.

The record shows that the Complainant managed to avoid termination through filing numerous disputes with the Company and obtaining nine (9) medical certificates. During this time, the Complainant had an extremely poor payment history, making only eight (8) valid payments over the course of the last four (4) calendar years, with several payment attempts being returned for nonsufficient funds.

Despite this, PECO chose to keep honoring the medical certificates.

The Commission's regulations clearly state that when a customer on a medical certificate has not met their obligation "to equitably make payments on all bills, the number of [medical certificate] renewals for the customer's household is limited to two 30-day certifications filed for the same set of arrearages."¹ Additionally, a utility always has the right to petition the Commission to vacate a medical certificate even before the limit of 3 medical certificates expires if the customer is not meeting their payment obligation.²

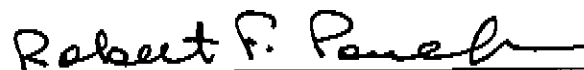
Further, in addition to allowing him to abuse the medical certificate procedures, PECO gave Mr. Blackshir five different payment arrangements and settled one Formal Complaint, all of which allowed Mr. Blackshir's already

¹ 52 Pa. Code § 56.114(2)

² *Id.* at § 56.118.

substantial account balance to continue to grow to the outrageous amount we see here.

Given the facts in this case, we can only conclude that PECO did not perform its due diligence with respect to this account.³ The fact that Mr. Blackshir was able to accrue such a high balance is exceptionally egregious given that PECO has personnel tasked with monitoring accounts with high arrearages. We would like to remind PECO, and all electric utilities, that they have an obligation and a duty to their well-paying customers to prevent accounts from accruing such high balances.



Robert F. Powelson, Chairman



Pamela A. Witmer, Commissioner

DATE: November 14, 2013

³ It is worth noting that many of the high balance issues we have seen with PECO in the past are partly due to the fact that customers received both gas and electric service from PECO. This, however, is not the case here; Mr. Blackshir only receives electric service, making this case all the more troubling.