

PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Marcus Love vs Philadelphia Gas Works

Public Meeting – January 29, 2015
2355580 - OSA
Docket No. F-2013-2355580


STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER PAMELA A. WITMER

Before the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (Commission) today for disposition is the Complaint of Marcus Love (Complainant) against Philadelphia Gas Works (PGW). The Complainant alleges in part that PGW installed a faulty meter, did not discover the error for four years and was improperly attempting to bill him for back charges.

I am supportive of the Motion offered by Vice Chairman Coleman today removing the conservation credit based on the record before us. However, I am troubled that PGW seemingly continues to have problems identifying issues regarding its meters in a timely fashion. In this case, the Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) device malfunctioned for a period of 40 months. During that time, PGW received a reading of “zero” for gas usage and did nothing to address the situation. In addition, the Company, operating on a cash flow basis, collected zero dollars on this customer’s gas usage. This is not the first time that this Commission has addressed a complaint involving malfunctioning AMRs at PGW and it frankly, begs the question: for a company operating on a case flow basis with other costly infrastructure issues how many additional malfunctioning AMRs or meters will it take for PGW to act appropriately and timely to collect rates for gas service it provides? If PGW would address these repeated issues in a systematic way, the Company would gain additional revenue that could be used for badly needed repairs on very poor infrastructure.

It is true that a customer must pay for the gas that is used, and I am troubled by the fact that the customer in this case did not question why he was receiving bills for more than three years reflecting no usage. Again, this is not our first case involving PGW’s inattention to its malfunctioning AMR devices. Discussions of infrastructure improvement often rightly focus on gas safety, but the Company’s failure to maintain accurate metering and billing infrastructure is also problematic and, in my opinion, symptomatic of larger issues. I support the fine in this case and will not hesitate to seek additional penalties in future cases related to AMR deficiencies based on record evidence including the Company’s history.

DATE: January 29, 2015


PAMELA A. WITMER
COMMISSIONER