

Tori L. Giesler, Esq.
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September 17, 2015

VIA UNITED PARCEL SERVICE

Rosemary Chiavetta, Secretary
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Commonwealth Keystone Building
400 North Street, 2nd Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17120

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SEP 17 2015

PA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
SECRETARY'S BUREAU


Re: Ronald Caldwell v. West Penn Power Company
Docket No. C-2015-2500823

Dear Secretary Chiavetta:

Attached please find the Preliminary Objections of West Penn Power Company in the above-referenced matter. Please date stamp the extra copy and return it to me in the postage-prepaid envelope provided. This document has been served on the Complainant as shown in the Certificate of Service.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,


Tori L. Giesler

dln
Enclosures

c: As per Certificate of Service

BEFORE THE
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

RONALD CALDWELL

v.

WEST PENN POWER COMPANY

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Docket No. C-2015-2500823

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NOTICE TO PLEAD

SEP 17 2015

TO: Ronald Caldwell

PA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
SECRETARY'S BUREAU

Pursuant to 52 Pa. Code § 5.101 you are hereby notified that if you do not file a reply to the enclosed Preliminary Objections of West Penn Power Company within ten (10) days from service of this notice, the facts set forth by West Penn Power Company in the Preliminary Objections may be deemed to be admitted, thereby requiring no other proof. All pleadings, such as a Reply to Objection, must be filed with the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, with a copy service to counsel for West Penn Power Company, and where applicable, the Administrative Law Judge presiding over the case.

File with:

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

With a copy to:

Tori L. Giesler
FirstEnergy Service Company
2800 Pottsville Pike
P.O. Box 16001
Reading, Pennsylvania 19612-6001

Dated: September 17, 2015


Tori L. Giesler

**BEFORE THE
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

RONALD CALDWELL

v.

WEST PENN POWER COMPANY

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Docket No. C-2015-2500823

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**PRELIMINARY OBJECTION TO THE COMPLAINT OF
RONALD CALDWELL**

PA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
SECRETARY'S BUREAU

TO THE PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION:

AND NOW, West Penn Power Company (“West Penn” or the “Company”), by and through its counsel, Tori L. Giesler, files this Preliminary Objection pursuant to Section 5.101(a) of Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (“Commission”) regulations, 52 Pa. Code § 5.101(a)(1), and in support thereof, avers as follows:

I. Introduction

1. In his recently filed Formal Complaint, Ronald Caldwell (“Complainant”) alleges he sustained damages to personal property located at 162 Nice Street, Waynesburg, Pennsylvania 15370 (“Service Location”) as a result of an alleged electric power “surge.” (Compl. ¶ 4.) The Complainant requests that the Commission direct West Penn to financially reimburse his homeowner’s insurance company as well as the \$500 deductible the Complainant paid for alleged personal property losses. (Compl. ¶ 5.)

2. As explained below, the Commission does not have the power and legal authority to award monetary damages. As a result, the Company requests that this Preliminary Objection be granted and that the Commission: (i) strike all allegations in the Formal Complaint regarding monetary damages; (ii) expressly prohibit the Complainant from introducing any testimony or

exhibits at any evidentiary hearing regarding alleged damages; (iii) dismiss the Formal Complaint in its entirety with prejudice; and (iv) grant the Company such other relief as may be just and reasonable under the circumstances.

II. Background

3. West Penn is an electric distribution company certificated as a public utility permitted to operate within the Commonwealth in Pennsylvania.

4. On or about August 28, 2015, the Complainant filed a Formal Complaint with the Commission against West Penn at the above-captioned docket solely requesting that the Commission direct the Company to financially reimburse the Complainant and his homeowner's insurance company for specific personal property losses allegedly sustained during an electric power "surge." (Compl. ¶¶ 4, 5.)

5. On or about August 28, 2015, the Formal Complaint was electronically served on West Penn.

6. West Penn is timely filing its Answer and New Matter contemporaneously with this Preliminary Objection.

III. Argument

7. The Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure permit parties to file preliminary objections. The grounds for preliminary objections are limited to those set forth in 52 Pa. Code § 5.101(a) as follows:

- (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.
- (3) Insufficient specificity of a pleading.
- (4) Legal insufficiency of a pleading.
- (5) Lack of capacity to sue, nonjoinder of a necessary party or misjoinder of a cause of action.

- (6) Pendency of a prior proceeding or agreement for alternative dispute resolution.
- (7) Standing of a party to participate in the proceeding.

8. The Commission's procedure regarding the disposition of preliminary objections is similar to that utilized in Pennsylvania civil practice. *Equitable Small Transportation Intervenors v. Equitable Gas Company*, Docket No. C-00935435 (Opinion and Order entered July 18, 1994).

9. The Commission's procedural regulations allow a party to object to pleadings that fail to comply with the rules of administrative practice or that include scandalous or impertinent matters. *See* 52 Pa. Code § 5.102(a)(2).

10. In his Formal Complaint, the Complainant states the following as his sole request for relief:

I would like my home owners to be reinburst for their loss as well as my 500.00 deductible.

(Compl. ¶ 5.)

11. Clearly, the only relief sought through the Formal Complaint is an award of monetary damages from the Company.

12. It is well-established under Pennsylvania law that the enforcement powers of the Commission do not include the power to award money damages. *Elkin v. Bell Tel. Co. of PA.*, 420 A.2d 371 (Pa. 1980); *Feingold v. Bell of Pa.*, 383 A.2d 791 (Pa. 1978); *see Nagy v. Bell Tel. Co. of PA.*, 436 A.2d 701 (Pa. Super. 1981).

13. In *Feingold*, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court explained:

. . . the statutory array of PUC remedial and enforcement powers does not include the power to award damages to a private litigant for breach of contract by a public utility. Nor can we find an express grant of power from which the power to award such damages can be fairly implied. Thus, it can be concluded that the Legislature did not intend for the PUC to have such a power.

Feingold, 383 A.2d at 794.

14. A prayer for damages which are not legally recoverable in the cause of action is “impertinent matter” in the sense that it is irrelevant to that cause of action, and is correctly challenged through a motion to strike the requested relief as impertinent matter. *Third Avenue Realty Limited Partners v. Pennsylvania-American Water Co.*, Docket No. C-2010-2167286 (Final Order entered September 30, 2010) (citing *Hudock v. Donegal Mut. Ins. Co.*, 264 A.2d 668 (Pa. 1970)).

15. Therefore, in accordance with Pennsylvania law, this Commission does not have the power to award monetary damages, and the Complainant’s request for money damages is an impertinent matter that must be stricken.


IV. Conclusion

WHEREFORE, for the foregoing reasons, West Penn Power Company respectfully requests that the Commission: (1) grant its Preliminary Objections and strike the Complainant’s request for monetary damages; (2) expressly prohibit the Complainant from introducing any

testimony or exhibits at any evidentiary hearing regarding alleged damages; (3) dismiss the Formal Complaint in its entirety with prejudice; and (4) grant the Company such other relief as may be just and reasonable under the circumstances.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: September 17, 2015


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Counsel for West Penn Power Company

**BEFORE THE
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

RONALD CALDWELL

v.

WEST PENN POWER COMPANY

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Docket No. C-2015-2500823

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I have this day served a true copy of the Preliminary Objections of West Penn Power Company to the Formal Complaint of Ronald Caldwell upon the individuals listed below, in accordance with the requirements of 52 Pa. Code § 5.61 (relating to service by a participant).

Service by First Class Mail, postage prepaid, as follows:


Ronald Caldwell
162 Nice Street
Waynesburg, PA 15370

RECEIVED

SEP 17 2015

**PA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
SECRETARY'S BUREAU**

Dated: September 17, 2015


Tori L. Giesler
FirstEnergy Service Company
2800 Pottsville Pike
P.O. Box 16001
Reading, Pennsylvania 19612-6001
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(610) 921-6633
AE-1440
2800 POTTSVILLE PIKE
READING PA 19605-2459

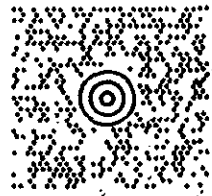
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SHIP TO:

ROSEMARY CHIAVETTA, SECRETARY
PA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
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HARRISBURG PA 17120-0079



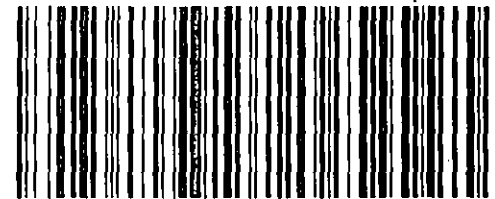
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