

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

**Silver Valley Apartments/
Mike Vianello**

v.

PPL Electric Utilities Corporation

**Public Meeting held January 26, 2017
2510119 – OSA
Docket No. C-2015-2510119**

STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER DAVID W. SWEET

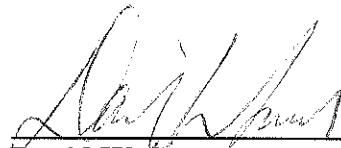
This matter comes to us as exceptions to the Initial Decision of Administrative Law Judge Ember Jandebaur, which dismissed the Complaint of a customer whose electric service account had been placed in the name of another without his permission when the new customer gave PPL the wrong address using PPL's self-service website. The customer's account was closed for 56 days and corrected when the error was discovered.

The Commission relies on consistency with the case captioned *Kashmer v. PPL Electric Utilities Corporation*, Docket No. F-2015-2487224 (Opinion and Order entered August 29, 2016). In *Kashmer*, an individual sought to initiate service at the address of the Complainant's second home, and the request was processed as if that individual were the new owner of the home. When it turned out that she had an arrearage from a prior address, PPL considered her to be a user without a contract account and began termination proceedings. The complainant discovered the termination notices before service was terminated and contacted PPL to stop the process. The Commission Order emphasized that PPL had his contact information and could have called but did not. The Order states that it was the initiation of the termination process without verifying whether the request for service by the second individual was accurate that caused concern. We noted that, as technologies evolve and more functions are performed remotely through websites, inaccuracies regarding service requests and disconnects could increase. We encouraged PPL and all regulated utilities to consider ways to better address such requests for service so that all transactions are performed in an accurate and timely manner.

I note that PPL had not had an opportunity to implement any improvements to its process between *Kashmer* and the present case because the litigation of this matter occurred prior to the issuance of our *Kashmer* decision, and even the ALJ's decision was issued earlier, on May 2, 2016. In other words, this case has already been litigated and an Initial Decision issued before the Commission's decision in *Kashmer*. In light of the circumstances where PPL has experienced several cases where the website's ease of service changes without its checking the accuracy of the requests has had erroneous results, there is no doubt that PPL is expected to implement safeguards. However, it did not have that opportunity before this case.

I have indicated in the past that I do not agree with imposing what amounts to a relatively meaningless civil penalty against a large utility, and I reiterate that opinion here. Especially under the circumstances present today, it is my opinion that the imposition of a \$500 civil penalty serves no useful purpose. What would be useful is requiring PPL to tell us when and what manner of improvements it makes to its self-service website and associated processes to prevent this type of error from occurring in the future.

January 26, 2017
DATE



David W. Sweet
Commissioner