

**PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
HARRISBURG, PA 17105**

Robert J. Kramer
v.
Duquesne Light Company

Public Meeting: March 16, 2017
2499181-OSA
Docket No. F-2015-2499181

STATEMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN ANDREW G. PLACE


Before the Commission for consideration are the Exceptions filed by Duquesne Light Company (Duquesne or Company) in response to the Initial Decision (I.D.) issued in this case. The I.D. sustained the Complaint of Robert J. Kramer and granted the requested relief of reimbursement as the Administrative Law Judge determined that Duquesne overcharged the Complainant for electric service. In addition, the I.D. imposed a civil penalty against the Company for failing to provide reasonable and adequate service when Duquesne failed to compute billing statements under the rate most advantageous to the Complainant.

In this case, Mr. Kramer's residence had an add-on heat pump which was installed by the previous owner. When Mr. Kramer initiated service at his newly acquired property in 2000, he was placed on the rate schedule of the previous owner. Tr. 22-23. At that time and until 2014, the Complainant indicated that he was not aware that the Company offered several rate schedules for residential heating customers or that he or the previous property owner was to inform Duquesne that an add-on heat pump was already located in the home. Tr. 12-13.

Also, the record in this proceeding demonstrates that Duquesne's tariff directs its customers to notify the Company if any changes are made to the connected load, demand or other conditions of use. Tr. 52, Exh. 6. This tariff provision may, however, be difficult for customers to locate – which becomes a barrier to informing Duquesne of any changed conditions to ensure the most advantageous residential heating rate is applied to their account. In order for customers to fully inform the Company of any changes to their residences regarding heating sources, they must be aware of their obligations. Thus, I would encourage Duquesne to increase its efforts to provide additional information to customers concerning residential heating rates and the significance of informing the Company of their heating sources. This type of education can be accomplished in a variety of ways including, social media, news releases, bill inserts as well as customer service representative training. In addition, I encourage the Company to consider changes in the application process as another avenue to ensure residential customers are aware of the applicable rate options.

I believe it is prudent that all utilities consider examining this issue to determine whether additional consumer education is needed on the availability of discrete residential rates and whether they are impacted by customers' heating sources. Consumer education on the part of utilities may well provide broad positive results and be in the best interest of both customers and companies.

DATE: March 16, 2017



Andrew G. Place, Vice Chairman