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July 5, 2018

**VIA E-FILING**

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

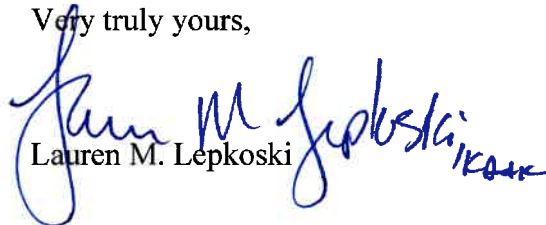
**Re: Jan and Jack Milburn v. West Penn Power Company**  
**Docket No. C-2018-3002756**

Dear Secretary Chiavetta:

Attached please find the Preliminary Objections of West Penn Power Company in the above-referenced matter. This document has been served on the Complainants as shown in the Certificate of Service.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

  
Lauren M. Lepkoski

krak  
Enclosures

c: As per Certificate of Service

**BEFORE THE  
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

**JAN AND JACK MILBURN**

**v.**

**WEST PENN POWER COMPANY**

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:  
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:

**Docket No. C-2018-3002756**

**NOTICE TO PLEAD**

TO: Jan and Jack Milburn

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:

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

Date: July 5, 2018

  
Lauren M. Lepkoski, Esquire  
Tori L. Giesler, Esquire

**BEFORE THE  
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

<b>JAN AND JACK MILBURN</b>	:	
	:	
v.	:	<b>Docket No. C-2018-3002756</b>
	:	
<b>WEST PENN POWER COMPANY</b>	:	

**PRELIMINARY OBJECTION TO THE FORMAL COMPLAINT OF  
JAN AND JACK MILBURN**

TO THE PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION:

AND NOW, West Penn Power Company ("West Penn" or the "Company"), by and through its counsel, Lauren M. Lepkoski and 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 their recently filed Formal Complaint, Jan and Jack Milburn ("Complainants"), who reside at 114 Mountain Road, Ligonier, Pennsylvania 15658 ("Service Location") allege that they do not want a smart meter installed at the Service Location. (Formal Complaint ¶ 5.) The Complainants state as requested relief:

**My husband and I have multiple health problems. We go to great lengths to protect our home environment and have read numerous studies questioning the safety of smart meters which emit EMFs on a consistent basis resulting in exposure to occupants. We do not want a smart meter installed. We have contacted West Penn Power numerous times to request an alternative to smart meter installation. West Penn has failed to communicate with us, sending unsigned form letters that state that we have not responded to their notification of the installation of a smart meter. We have also sent a letter to West Penn regarding our health concerns related to EMFs emitted by smart meters.**

**When were the public hearings for residents of Pennsylvania to testify that we want to have the capability to opt out of smart meters? Smart**

meters are being installed without permission. Where is the right of citizens to due process? Did the PUC hear the testimony of independent professionals in the area of electromagnetic fields regarding studies linking smart meters to various disorders and physiological effects? If my electricity is turned off, we could suffer health problems as my husband has heart problems and I cannot regulate body temperature well due to my immune condition. Citizens deserve the right to opt out of a smart meter even if they have to pay extra to have their meters read. This is now being done or considered in many locales across the county. The PUC sought a law mandating usage of a device that emits EMFs which are increasingly being linked to health effects. Now I ask that you provide us with an option that will protect our health.

**Excerpts from a few studies/researchers on EMFs:**

**In France, wifi is not permissible in schools for young children due to health concerns.**

**“Dr. David Carpenter MD of Harvard Medical School and a physician who has worked in the area of electromagnetic fields (EMFs) and public health for over 18 years:**

**“There is no evidence whatsoever that smart meters are in any way safe for human beings. There is, in fact, ample evidence that demonstrates “convincingly and consistently” that exposure to radiofrequency radiation (RFR) at elevated levels for long periods of time increases the risk of cancer, damages the nervous system, and adversely affects the reproductive organs. Informed consumers should demand that they be allowed to keep their analog meter.”**

**David Wientjes, president of the Council on Wireless Technology Impacts: “The FCC guidelines for public RF exposure are based on 30 minute exposures, not every day 24/7 type of exposures. Current regulations do not take into account the plethora of peer reviewed studies that show health effects and cellular damage a 1,000 to 10,000 times lower than the thermal based standard used today.”**

**Pall ML. Wi-Fi is an important threat to human health. Environmental Research. 164:405-416. 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2018.01.035>**

**Abstract “Repeated Wi-Fi studies show that Wi-Fi causes oxidative stress, sperm/testicular damage, neuropsychiatric effects including EEG changes, apoptosis, cellular DNA damage, endocrine changes, and calcium overload. Each of these effects are also caused by exposures to other microwave frequency EMFs, with each such effect being documented in from 10 to 16 reviews”**

(Formal Complaint ¶ 5.)

2. The Company is in the process of deploying smart meters in its service territory in accordance with Act 129 of 2008 (“Act 129”).<sup>1</sup>

3. On June 21, 2017, Mrs. Milburn contacted the Company to refuse installation of a smart meter at the Service Location due to health concerns. On March 19, 2018, the Company attempted to contact the Complainants to discuss their concerns regarding the smart meter installation and a message was left seeking a return telephone call. Later that day, Mrs. Milburn called the Company in response to the message left by the Company representative. Mrs. Milburn reiterated her refusal of the smart meter installation due to health concerns and stated that she does not want Company representatives on her property. The Company representative attempted to address Mrs. Milburn’s concerns and advised that electric service may be terminated for refusal of the installation of a smart meter. Mrs. Milburn continued to refuse installation of a smart meter at the Service Location. On March 21, 2018, the Company sent correspondence to the Complainants in an attempt to schedule installation of a smart meter at the Service Location. On March 23, 2018, Mr. Milburn contacted the Company to refuse installation of a smart meter at the Service Location due to health concerns and stated that he does not want Company representatives on his property at all. The Company representative attempted to address Mrs. Milburn’s concerns and advised that electric service may be terminated for refusal of the installation of a smart meter. Mr. Milburn continued to refuse installation of a smart meter at the Service Location. On May 15, 2018, the Company sent correspondence to the Complainants in an attempt to schedule installation of a smart

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<sup>1</sup> 66 Pa.C.S. § 2806.1 *et seq.* Among other things, Act 129 specifically directed that electric distribution companies with at least 100,000 customers file a smart meter technology procurement and installation plan with the Commission for approval. 66 Pa.C.S. § 2807(f)(1) and (2).

meter at the Service Location. On May 21, 2018, Mrs. Milburn contacted the Company stating that she wanted to “opt-out” of the smart meter installation and continued to refuse installation. On May 25, 2018, a pre-disconnection warning letter was issued to the Complainants pursuant to 66 Pa.C.S. § 1406, 52 Pa. Code § 56.81 and Rules 9 and 20 of the Company’s Commission-approved tariff.<sup>2</sup> On June 5, 2018, a service termination notice was issued to the Complainants pursuant to 66 Pa.C.S. § 1406, 52 Pa. Code § 56.81 and Rules 9 and 20 of the Company’s Commission-approved tariff.<sup>3</sup> On June 7, 2018, the Company received a letter from the Complainants dated June 1, 2018 wherein the Complainants, *inter alia*, reiterated their refusal of the installation of a smart meter at the Service Location. On June 14, 2018, Mrs. Milburn contacted the Company to continue to refuse the smart meter installation and wanted to be placed on the “delay list.” Mrs. Milburn was advised that only the filing of a formal complaint with the Commission would delay installation. On June 14, 2018, the Complainants filed the Formal Complaint which was electronically served on the Company on June 15, 2018.

4. As explained in greater detail below, even if all of the facts in the Formal Complaint are accepted as true, they do not constitute a violation of any law which the Commission has jurisdiction to administer, or of any regulation or order of the Commission, such that relief can be granted.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> 66 Pa.C.S. § 1406(a)(4); 52 Pa. Code § 56.81(3); *West Penn Power Company Retail Electric Service Tariff*, Electric Pa. PUC No. 52, pp. 40, 55, issued May 1, 2015, effective May 3, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *See* 66 Pa.C.S. § 701.

5. As a result, the Company requests that this Preliminary Objection be granted and that the Commission: (1) strike the Complainant's request for an exemption from the installation of a smart meter; (2) dismiss the Formal Complaint in its entirety with prejudice; and (3) grant the Company such other relief as may be just and reasonable under the circumstances.

## **II. Background**

6. West Penn is an electric distribution company that is certificated as a public utility in Pennsylvania.

7. On June 21, 2017, Mrs. Milburn contacted the Company to refuse installation of a smart meter at the Service Location due to health concerns. On March 19, 2018, the Company attempted to contact the Complainants to discuss their concerns regarding the smart meter installation and a message was left seeking a return telephone call. Later that day, Mrs. Milburn called the Company in response to the message left by the Company representative. Mrs. Milburn reiterated her refusal of the smart meter installation due to health concerns and stated that she does not want Company representatives on her property. The Company representative attempted to address Mrs. Milburn's concerns and advised that electric service may be terminated for refusal of the installation of a smart meter. Mrs. Milburn continued to refuse installation of a smart meter at the Service Location. On March 21, 2018, the Company sent correspondence to the Complainants in an attempt to schedule installation of a smart meter at the Service Location. On March 23, 2018, Mr. Milburn contacted the Company to refuse installation of a smart meter at the Service Location due to health concerns and stated that he does not want Company representatives on his property at all. The Company representative attempted to address Mrs. Milburn's concerns and advised that electric service may be terminated for refusal of the installation of a smart meter. Mr. Milburn continued to refuse installation of a smart meter at the Service Location. On May 15, 2018, the

Company sent correspondence to the Complainants in an attempt to schedule installation of a smart meter at the Service Location. On May 21, 2018, Mrs. Milburn contacted the Company stating that she wanted to “opt-out” of the smart meter installation and continued to refuse installation. On May 25, 2018, a pre-disconnection warning letter was issued to the Complainants pursuant to 66 Pa.C.S. § 1406, 52 Pa. Code § 56.81 and Rules 9 and 20 of the Company’s Commission-approved tariff.<sup>5</sup> On June 5, 2018, a service termination notice was issued to the Complainants pursuant to 66 Pa.C.S. § 1406, 52 Pa. Code § 56.81 and Rules 9 and 20 of the Company’s Commission-approved tariff.<sup>6</sup> On June 7, 2018, the Company received a letter from the Complainants dated June 1, 2018 wherein the Complainants, *inter alia*, reiterated their refusal of the installation of a smart meter at the Service Location. On June 14, 2018, Mrs. Milburn contacted the Company to continue to refuse the smart meter installation and wanted to be placed on the “delay list.” Mrs. Milburn was advised that only the filing of a formal complaint with the Commission would delay installation.

8. On June 14, 2018, the Complainants filed the instant Formal Complaint with the Commission and, on June 15, 2018, the Company was electronically served with the Formal Complaint.

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<sup>5</sup> 66 Pa.C.S. § 1406(a)(4); 52 Pa. Code § 56.81(3); *West Penn Power Company Retail Electric Service Tariff*, Electric Pa. PUC No. 52, pp. 40, 55, issued May 1, 2015, effective May 3, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

9. West Penn is timely filing its Answer and New Matter contemporaneously with this Preliminary Objection, which Answer and New Matter is incorporated into this Preliminary Objection as if fully set forth herein.

### **III. Argument**

10. 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.

11 The Commission's procedure regarding the disposition of preliminary objections is similar to that utilized in Pennsylvania civil practice.<sup>7</sup>

12. A preliminary objection in civil practice seeking dismissal of a pleading will be granted only where relief is clearly warranted and free from doubt.<sup>8</sup> The Commission has adopted this standard.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Equitable Small Transportation Intervenors v. Equitable Gas Company*, Docket No. C-00935435 (Opinion and Order entered July 18, 1994).

<sup>8</sup> *Interstate Traveler Services, Inc. v. Pa. Dept. of Environmental Resources*, 406 A.2d 1020 (Pa. 1979); *Rivera v. Philadelphia Theological Seminary of St. Charles Borromeo, Inc.*, 595 A.2d 172 (Pa. Super. 1991).

<sup>9</sup> *Montague v. Philadelphia Electric Company*, 66 Pa. PUC 24 (1988).

13. In accordance with Section 701 of the Code<sup>10</sup> a person may file a complaint which sets forth “any act or thing done or omitted to be done by any public utility in violation, or claimed violation, of any law which the commission has jurisdiction to administer, or of any regulation or order of the commission.” As explained below, the Company has not violated the Public Utility Code or the orders or regulations of the Commission.<sup>11</sup> In fact, the Company’s action have been in compliance with Act 129 and the June 5 Order.

14. The moving party may not rely on its own factual assertions but must accept for the purposes of disposition of the preliminary objection, all well-pleaded, material facts of the other party, as well as every inference fairly deducible from those facts.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, in ruling on a preliminary objection, the Commission must assume, for decisional purposes only, that the factual allegations of the Formal Complaint are true.<sup>13</sup>

15. West Penn’s smart meter deployment plan was approved by the Commission at Docket No. M-2013-2341991 by Order entered June 5, 2014. In accordance with the June 5 Order, the Company filed its final Smart Meter Deployment Plan (“SMP”) on June 16, 2014. The SMP was approved by the Commission on June 20, 2014. The Complainants challenge no aspect of the Company’s provision of electric service other than the installation of a smart meter at the Service Location, as required by Act 129 and the Company’s SMP.

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<sup>10</sup> 66 Pa.C.S. § 701

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

<sup>12</sup> *County of Allegheny v. Commw. of Pa.*, 490 A.2d 402 (Pa. 1985).

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

16. Commission precedent is uniform that it cannot grant exceptions to the statutory directive that smart meters be installed by allowing customers to opt out.<sup>14</sup>

17. Assuming the facts pleaded in the Formal Complaint are true, as the Commission must for the purposes of ruling on a preliminary objection, the Complainants have failed to allege that West Penn has committed or omitted an act in violation of a Commission statute, regulation, order, or West Penn's tariff, a finding of which must be made in order to sustain a formal complaint.<sup>15</sup>

18. Because Act 129 and the Commission's orders not only authorize but require the Company to develop and implement a smart meter procurement and installation plan, and do not allow a customer to opt out of having a smart meter installed, this Complaint must be dismissed. As a matter of law, the Company is required to install a smart meter at the Service Location. As such, the Commission cannot find the Company to be in violation for having attempted to follow the law as it has done here.

19. Therefore, the Formal Complaint is legally insufficient because it fails to state a claim upon which the Commission can grant relief.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Negley v. Metropolitan Edison Company*, Docket No. C-2010-2205305 (Final Order entered March 3, 2011); *Lutherschmidt v. Metropolitan Edison Company*, Docket No. C-2010-2200353 (Final Order entered March 25, 2011). The Commission has continued to uphold installation of smart meters and imposition of smart meter charges on customers' bills by dismissing complaints opposing installation of smart meters and imposition of smart meter charges on the basis of legal insufficiency. *Corbett v. Pennsylvania Power Company*, Docket No. C-2011-2219898 (Final Order entered May 27, 2011); *Jones v. Metropolitan Edison Company*, Docket No. C-2011-2224380 (Final Order entered June 28, 2011); *Griffin v. Metropolitan Edison Company*, Docket No. C-2012-2300172 (Final Order entered July 31, 2012); *Brake v. West Penn Power Company*, Docket No. C-2013-2367308 (Opinion and Order entered November 14, 2013); *Drake v. Pennsylvania Electric Company*, Docket No. C-2014-2413771 (Final Order entered July 5, 2014); *Efaw v. West Penn Power Company*, Docket No. C-2014-2413744 (Final Order entered July 5, 2014). See also, the Initial Decision of ALJ Susan D. Colwell in *Dennis McElwain v. Pennsylvania Power Company*, Docket No. C-2014-2451478 issued December 16, 2015.

<sup>15</sup> See 66 Pa.C.S. § 701; *County of Allegheny*, supra. (Compl. ¶ 4.)

<sup>16</sup> See 52 Pa. Code § 5.101(a)(4).

20. The Commission may dismiss a complaint without hearing if a hearing is not necessary in the public interest.<sup>17</sup>

21. Recently, the Commission set for hearing two cases in which the complainant was opposed to the installation of a smart meter at their premises.<sup>18</sup> These cases represent a departure from past Commission practice of dismissing such complaints on Preliminary Objections. The Commission stated that where a complainant has presented specific factual averments regarding the health or other effects that they have experienced after a smart meter was installed at their home, the Commission has overruled Preliminary Objections and allowed a case to proceed. Specifically, in *Kreider*, the complainant alleged specific deleterious health effects after installation of a smart meter affecting her specific medical condition. Further, in *Van Schoyck*, the complainants alleged potential health risks due to constant ringing noise in their home and their inability to sleep since the time the smart meter was installed.<sup>19</sup> In contrast, in the instant case, the Complainants have made no specific factual averments regarding any health effects *after* installation of a smart meter. Specifically, the Complainants state, *inter alia*, that they do not want a smart meter installed due to generic health concerns and wish to “opt-out.” The Commission is unable to grant the Complainant an “exemption” from Act 129. The Commission has not recognized a customer’s lack of consent to install a smart meter as sufficient to overcome Preliminary Objections.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> 66 Pa.C.S. § 703(b); 52 Pa. Code § 5.21 (d).

<sup>18</sup> *Susan Kreider v. PECO Energy Company*, Docket No. C-2015-2469655 (Order on Reconsideration entered January 28, 2016); *Stephen and Diane Van Schoyck v. PECO Energy Company*, Docket No. C-2015-2478239 (Opinion and Order entered February 25, 2016).

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

<sup>20</sup> *Richard and Marie Fugo in care of Fugo Eye Institute v. PECO Energy Company*, Docket Nos. C-2015-2519763 and C-2015-2519770 (Order entered April 6, 2016).

22. In *Charles F. Jackson v. Pennsylvania Electric Company*, Docket No. C-2017-2600495 (Order Entered August 31, 2017), the Commission approved the Initial Decision of ALJ David A. Salapa, dated June 26, 2017, which granted the Preliminary Objections of Pennsylvania Electric Company and dismissed the formal complaint of Mr. Jackson (who was disputing the installation of a smart meter) finding that formal complaint was legally insufficient, pursuant to 52 Pa. Code § 5.101(a)(4), in that the complaint fails to allege that the utility violated the Public Utility Code, Commission regulations or orders or its tariff provisions. The respondent was found to be authorized to install smart meters and impose a charge on its customers to develop and implement a smart meter procurement and installation plan that will lead to the installation of smart meters throughout its service territory. ALJ Salapa further found that the respondent was authorized to terminate the Mr. Jackson's service if he refused to provide the respondent with access to its meter and equipment to install the smart meter.

This Commission decision was entered after *Kreider*. The instant formal complaint is similar to the alleged averments in the formal complaint at Docket No. C-2017-2600495, in that the Complainants have only alleged that they do not want a smart meter at the Service Location due to health concerns and that they wish to "opt-out" of having a smart meter installed at the Service Location. The Complainants have not set forth in their complaint that any act done by the Company violates a Commission regulation, statute or order.

23. Therefore, the Company respectfully submits that the matters plead in the subject Formal Complaint do not meet the standards set in *Kreider* and *Van Schoyck* such that this matter can survive dismissal on preliminary objections.

24. Further, the Commission has upheld decisions granting preliminary objections and dismissing complaints for legal insufficiency opposing smart meter installation. In *Negley*, ALJ Susan D. Colwell dismissed a complaint opposing installation of smart meters for legal insufficiency. ALJ Colwell concluded that Act 129 of 2008 authorized the installation of smart meters by EDCs. ALJ Colwell held that the Commission's orders approving the EDC's smart meter plans did not exempt any customers from the smart meter plans. By Commission final order entered March 3, 2011, ALJ Colwell's Initial Decision became final without further Commission action.

25. Rule 9 of the Company's Commission-approved tariff,<sup>21</sup> allows the Company to have access to its customers' premises for any and all purposes relating to the supply of electric energy which includes the exchange of meters. The Complainants refusal to allow the Company access to its own meter is a violation of Rules 9 and 20 of the Company's Commission-approved tariff<sup>22</sup> and is grounds for termination of service. The Commission has also upheld decisions finding that a utility has the ability to terminate the service of a customer who refuses installation of a smart meter.<sup>23</sup>

26. Because Act 129 of 2008 and the Commission's orders authorize the Company to develop and implement a smart meter procurement and installation plan, the Complainants have not set forth in his complaint any act done by the Company that violates a Commission regulation, statute or order.

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<sup>21</sup> *West Penn Power Company Retail Electric Service Tariff*, Electric Pa. PUC No. 52, p. 40 issued May 1, 2015, effective May 3, 2015.

<sup>22</sup> *West Penn Power Company Retail Electric Service Tariff*, Electric Pa. PUC No. 52, pp. 40, 55, issued May 1, 2015, effective May 3, 2015.

<sup>23</sup> *Art Larson v. PECO Energy Company*; Docket No. C-2014-2451754 (Opinion and Order entered June 11, 2015). See also, *Catherine J. Frompovitch v. PECO Energy Company*; Docket No. C-2015-2474602 (Opinion and Order entered May 3, 2018).

**IV. Conclusion**

WHEREFORE, for the foregoing reasons, West Penn Power Company respectfully requests that the Commission: (1) strike the Complainants' request for an exemption from the installation of a smart meter; (2) dismiss the Formal Complaint in its entirety with prejudice; and (3) grant the Company such other relief as may be just and reasonable under the circumstances.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: July 5, 2018



Lauren M. Lepkoski  
Attorney No. 94800

Tori L. Giesler

Attorney No. 207742

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Counsel for West Penn Power Company

**BEFORE THE  
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

**JAN AND JACK MILBURN**

**v.**

**WEST PENN POWER COMPANY**

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**Docket No. C-2018-3002756**

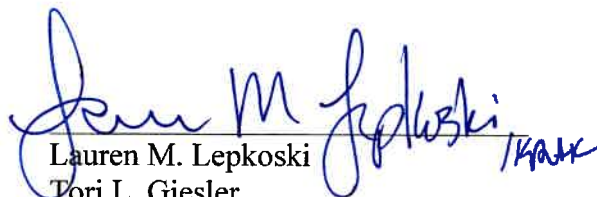
**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

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 Jan and Jack Milburn upon the individuals listed below, in accordance with the requirements of 52 Pa. Code § 1.54 (relating to service by a participant).

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

Jan and Jack Milburn  
114 Mountain Road  
Ligonier, PA 15658

Dated: July 5, 2018



Lauren M. Lepkoski  
Tori L. Giesler  
FirstEnergy Service Company  
2800 Pottsville Pike  
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