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July 28, 2022

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Rosemary Chiavetta, Secretary
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Commonwealth Keystone Building
400 North Street, 2nd Floor North
P.O. Box 3265
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265

**Re: PA PUC v. Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc.
Docket Nos. R-2022-3031211, et al.**

Dear Secretary Chiavetta:

Attached for filing please find the Answer of Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc. to Richard C. Culbertson's Motion for A Special Investigation in the above-referenced proceedings. Copies will be provided per the attached Certificate of Service.

Respectfully submitted,



Lindsay A. Berkstresser

LAB/kl
Attachment

cc: Honorable Christopher P. Pell (*via email; w/att.*)
Honorable John M. Coogan (*via email; w/att.*)
Certificate of Service

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that true and correct copies of the foregoing have been served upon the following persons, in the manner indicated, in accordance with the requirements of § 1.54 (relating to service by a participant).

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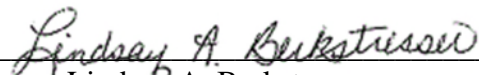
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Date: July 28, 2022


Lindsay A. Berkstresser

**BEFORE THE
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission	:	R-2022-3031211
Office of Small Business Advocate	:	C-2022-3031632
Office of Consumer Advocate	:	C-2022-3031767
Pennsylvania State University	:	C-2022-3031957
Columbia Industrial Intervenors	:	C-2022-3032178
Jose A. Serrano	:	C-2022-3031821
Constance Wile	:	C-2022-3031749
Richard C. Culbertson	:	C-2022-3032203
	:	
v.	:	
	:	
Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc	:	

**ANSWER OF COLUMBIA GAS OF PENNSYLVANIA, INC.
TO RICHARD C. CULBERTSON’S
MOTION FOR A SPECIAL INVESTIGATION**

TO THE PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION:

I. INTRODUCTION

On July 8, 2022, Richard C. Culbertson filed a “Motion for a Special Investigation” (hereinafter “Motion” or “Culbertson Motion”) with the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (“Commission”). In his Motion, Mr. Culbertson requests that the Commission institute an investigation to address the issues raised in the testimony of a witness who participated in the public input hearing held on June 1, 2022, as well as an incident that occurred on July 31, 2019, at 100 Park Lane in Washington County, Pennsylvania.¹ In his Motion, Mr. Culbertson also presents arguments regarding other Pennsylvania utilities and the Commission. Prior to filing the Motion

¹ This Motion represents the third attempt by Mr. Culbertson to delay these proceedings through a demand for an “independent audit and investigation.” See Prehearing Order #3, dated May 16, 2022 (denying Mr. Culbertson’s request to suspend the rate case) and Prehearing Order # 6, dated June 24, 2022 (denying Mr. Culbertson’s request for a special investigation).

with the Commission, on June 14, 2022, Mr. Culbertson also filed a similar “Motion for Special Investigation” in Columbia’s base rate case, requesting that Administrative Law Judges Christopher P. Pell and John Coogan (the “ALJs”) initiate an investigation separate from the base rate case. On June 24, 2022, the ALJs issued Prehearing Order #6 denying Mr. Culbertson Motion for Special Investigation. Mr. Culbertson’s Motion to the Commission followed.

Columbia hereby submits its Answer to Mr. Culbertson’s Motion for Special Investigation and requests that the Commission deny the Motion. As explained herein, Mr. Culbertson’s request for a special investigation is not necessary because the issues raised in the public input hearing testimony are being addressed as part of Columbia’s base rate case at Docket No. R-2022-3031211, and the incident that occurred on July 31, 2019, in Washington County, Pennsylvania is the subject of a separate pending investigation by the Commission at Docket No. M-2022-3012079. Moreover, any complaints Mr. Culbertson has against other Pennsylvania utilities or the Commission are not related to Columbia and do not support an investigation of Columbia.

II. ARGUMENT

A. MR. CULBERTSON’S REQUEST FOR A SPECIAL INVESTIGATION IS UNNECESSARY AND SHOULD BE DENIED.

1. The issues raised at the public input hearing are already being addressed as part of Columbia’s base rate case at Docket No. R-2022-3031211.

In the Motion, Mr. Culbertson requests that the Commission initiate a special investigation into the testimony of a public input hearing witness who testified regarding Columbia’s safety practices. Culbertson Motion, pp. 13-16. The public input hearing witness testified regarding gas

safety, specifically the installation of curb valves and contractor training.² Tr. at 85-88. Mr. Culbertson requests an investigation into these issues. Culbertson Motion, pp. 13-16.

Mr. Culbertson's request for an investigation is unnecessary because these issues are already being investigated and addressed in the Company's base rate case. The Commission initiated an investigation into Columbia's proposed rate increase, which includes the issues identified in Mr. Culbertson's Motion. *See Pa. PUC v. Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc.*, Docket No. R-2022-3031211 (Order entered April 14, 2022). With respect to the testimony of the public input hearing witness, that testimony is part of the record and will be considered in the base rate case. Columbia presented evidence in response to the public input hearing testimony when it submitted its rebuttal testimony on July 6, 2022.

Columbia presented the rebuttal testimony of Mark Kempic, who addressed the concerns raised in the public input hearing testimony, including the Company's Corrective Action Program, the installation of curb valves and meter valves, contractor training, and risk evaluation for pipe replacement. *See Columbia St. No. 1-R*, pp. 12-20. Columbia also presented the rebuttal testimony of C.J. Anstead, who testified regarding Columbia's safety initiatives, leak detection and pipe replacement. *See Columbia St. No. 14-R*. This testimony is specifically responsive to the matters raised by the public input hearing witness. One of the primary reasons Mr. Culbertson asserts for the requested investigation is based on his allegation that Columbia has failed to install curb valves. Culbertson Motion, p. 14. However, as explained in the rebuttal testimony of witness Kempic, Columbia's safety standards require that each service line have a shut off valve outside the home, and the safety standards specify when a curb valve should be used. *Columbia St. No. 1-R*, p. 18. Mr. Kempic also explained that a meter valve enables quicker shutoff during priority

² Although Mr. Culbertson's Motion refers to the public input hearing witness as "XXXXX", the witness publicly identified himself at the hearing.

situations since it is located above ground and next to the meter, which makes it easy to locate for a quick resolution. A curb valve, on the other hand, is not in plain sight or near the meter, and often requires personnel to be called out to locate it. Columbia St. No. 1-R, pp. 18-19. Therefore, one of Mr. Culbertson's primary claimed reasons for the investigation is based on his incorrect beliefs regarding curb valves.³

The testimony of the public input hearing witness and the testimony of Columbia's witnesses will be part of the record for the Commission's decision in the base rate case. Moreover, issues pertaining to gas safety have been the subject of discovery in the base rate case. Therefore, Mr. Culbertson's request for an investigation would be duplicative of the investigation of these issues that is already occurring in the base rate case, and his Motion should be denied.

2. The July 31, 2019 incident at 100 Park Lane in Washington County, Pennsylvania is the subject of a separate Commission investigation at Docket No. M-2022-3012079.

As support for his Motion, Mr. Culbertson references an incident that occurred on July 31, 2019, at 100 Park Lane in Washington County, Pennsylvania. Culbertson Motion, pp. 6-9. This incident is currently being investigated by the Commission at Docket No. M-2022-3012079. On June 16, 2022, the Commission issued an Opinion and Order certifying the Joint Petition for Approval of Settlement between Columbia and the Commission's Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement ("I&E"). The Commission requested that interested parties file comments concerning the proposed Settlement within 25 days of the Opinion and Order. See June 16, 2022 Order, p. 13. Mr. Culbertson submitted comments on the proposed Settlement on July 17, 2022. Mr. Culbertson's comments on the proposed Settlement regarding the incident at 100 Park Lane

³ On July 26, 2022, witness Merritt for the Commission's Bureau of Investigation & Enforcement submitted surrebuttal testimony stating his position that a curb valve is not required to be installed in all instances. I&E St. No. 4-SR, pp. 10-11.

have already been submitted for the Commission's review and consideration prior to the Commission issuing a final order in that docket. Another investigation of this incident, as Mr. Culbertson requests, would be duplicative, unnecessary, and an inefficient use of the Commission's resources. Therefore, Mr. Culbertson's Motion should be denied.

B. MR. CULBERTSON'S COMPLAINTS REGARDING OTHER PENNSYLVANIA UTILITIES AND THE COMMISSION DO NOT PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR THE REQUESTED INVESTIGATION REGARDING COLUMBIA.

In his Motion, Mr. Culbertson claims that there is "disorder in the Commission's supervision of public utilities." Culbertson Motion, p. 16. He also claims that "the Commission has not installed effective internal controls over public utilities, which has allowed public utilities to establish a culture of abuse of customers." Culbertson Motion, p. 21. Whatever complaints Mr. Culbertson has against the Commission do not pertain to Columbia. Mr. Culbertson's general complaints about the Commission do not provide support for his requested investigation of Columbia. Issues related to the Commission generally should be raised in a generic proceeding, with proper notice to all potentially affected entities. Columbia does not have control over how the Commission operates or how it oversees jurisdictional utilities.

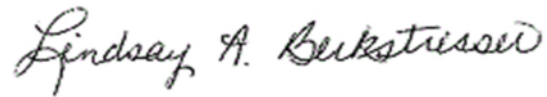
Mr. Culbertson also raises various allegations regarding other Pennsylvania utilities. He cites an incident that occurred in PECO's service territory. Culbertson Motion, p. 17. He claims that the service he receives from Peoples Natural Gas at his other properties is inadequate, particularly with respect to his service line. Culbertson Motion, pp. 18-19. He alleges that Duquesne Light Company caused damage at his home while replacing a pole. Culbertson Motion, pp. 19-20. None of these issues are related to Columbia. The complaints that Mr. Culbertson has raised against other utilities provide no support for his requested investigation of Columbia.

For the reasons explained above, none of the arguments in Mr. Culbertson's Motion support initiating a special investigation separate from the investigation that is currently ongoing in the base rate proceeding at Docket No. R-2022-3031211 and the investigation at Docket No. M-2022-3012079. Therefore, Columbia requests that the Motion be denied and that Mr. Culbertson's request for a special investigation be rejected.

III. CONCLUSION

WHEREFORE, Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc. respectfully requests that the Motion of Richard C. Culbertson for a Special Investigation be denied.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: June 28, 2022

VERIFICATION

I, Nicole Paloney, hereby state that the facts above set forth are true and correct (or are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief) and that I expect to be able to prove the same at a hearing held in this matter. I understand that the statements made herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa. C.S. § 4904 (relating to unsworn falsification to authorities).

Date: July 28, 2022

Nicole Paloney
Nicole Paloney
Director of Rates and Regulatory Affairs
Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc.