

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

Public Meeting held August 1, 2024

Commissioners Present:

Stephen M. DeFrank, Chairman
Kimberly Barrow, Vice Chair
Ralph V. Yanora
Kathryn L. Zerfuss
John F. Coleman, Jr.

Docket Number:
A-2024-3049172

Application for Approval of Abandonment of
Service by Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc. to
Two Inactive Residential Premises Located in
Shippenville, Clarion County, Pennsylvania

ORDER

BY THE COMMISSION:

On May 20, 2024, Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc. (Columbia Gas), Utility Code 120700, filed the above-captioned Application with the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (Commission) seeking a Certificate of Public Convenience authorizing it to abandon natural gas distribution service to two inactive residential premises located in Shippenville, Clarion County, Pennsylvania. The Application was filed pursuant to Section 1102(a)(2) of the Public Utility Code, 66 Pa. C.S. §1102(a)(2). For the reasons expressed herein, the Commission approves Columbia Gas's Application to abandon natural gas service to the two inactive residential premises.

Columbia Gas is a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Columbia Gas is currently engaged in the business of selling and distributing natural gas to retail customers within the Commonwealth. Columbia Gas provides retail natural gas service to approximately 445,000 customers in 26 counties of Pennsylvania, pursuant to certificates of public convenience granted by the Commission.

Columbia Gas states that the premises previously received natural gas service from a 1,758-foot section of distribution line that Columbia Gas owns and operates, which Columbia Gas refers to as the Knox – Amsler School MP System, a medium-pressure distribution system. Columbia Gas states that the two inactive residential premises have been disconnected since 2014, and 2017 respectively. Application ¶¶4-5.

Columbia Gas states that it is seeking to abandon all 1,758 feet of this section of the Knox – Amsler School MP System, which previously served the premises. Columbia Gas states that this section of the distribution line is comprised of bare steel and vintage plastic. Columbia Gas states that this section is approximately 46 years old and that these facilities are at the end of their useful life and need to be replaced. Columbia Gas also states that only the two inactive residential premises will be affected by the abandonment. Columbia Gas further states that there is no potential for customer growth along the portion of the distribution line that it proposes to abandon. Application ¶7.

Columbia Gas states that replacing these facilities is estimated to result in a net increase in its capital investment of at least \$175,800. Columbia Gas also states that there would be no expected revenue from the installation of facilities to serve the premises, and that the cost of installing such facilities is not justified. Columbia Gas states that the replacement of this section of the distribution line is not otherwise operationally needed for Columbia Gas to transport or deliver gas to other locations in its service territory. Columbia Gas further states that it is neither in the public interest, nor in the interest of Columbia

Gas's other customers, to replace the facilities that formerly served the premises.
Application ¶8.

Columbia Gas states that prior to filing this Application, it sent regular and certified letters, dated May 1, 2024, to the current owners of the premises. Columbia Gas states that the letters informed the owners of the premises that the facilities which previously served the premises are no longer needed for the operation of Columbia Gas's distribution system, and therefore, Columbia Gas is planning to take these facilities out of service. Columbia Gas states that the letter also advised the premises owners that Columbia Gas intended to file an abandonment application with the Commission on or after May 15, 2024, and that gas distribution service from Columbia Gas would no longer be available to the premises if the Commission were to grant the application. Columbia Gas states that letter advised the property owners of the premises to contact Columbia Gas if they had any questions or concerns. Columbia Gas states that as of July 23, 2024, the property owners have not contacted Columbia. Application ¶9 and informal discovery.

Accordingly, Columbia Gas requests that the Commission issue a Certificate of Public Convenience pursuant to 66 Pa. C.S. § 1102(a)(2) to permit Columbia Gas to abandon natural gas distribution service to the two inactive residential premises located in Shippenville, Clarion County, Pennsylvania. Columbia Gas concludes that approval of its application is necessary and proper for the following reasons:

- 1) The distribution line that previously served the premises must be abandoned due to having reached the end of its useful life.
- 2) The two inactive residential premises have not received natural gas service for over five years.

- 3) The significant cost to replace the facilities that formerly served the affected premises cannot be justified, since such replacement facilities will not produce any revenues and are not operationally needed.

Notice of the filing of this Application was published in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin* on Saturday June 1, 2024. Columbia Gas published notice of this application in the area newspaper¹ on June 4, 2024, and the notarized proof of publication was furnished to the Commission on June 12, 2024. No protests were filed, and no hearings were held.

Upon full consideration of the facts presented in this case, we concur with Columbia Gas's reasons for abandonment of the two inactive residential premises located in Shippenville, Clarion County, Pennsylvania, and agree that it is neither reasonable nor prudent to replace the distribution line serving the premises. Therefore, we approve Columbia Gas's Application to abandon natural gas service to the two inactive residential premises. However, we note that the abandonment shall be completed in accordance with 52 Pa Code §§56.91 - 56.100; **THEREFORE,**

IT IS ORDERED:

1. That the Application for Approval of Abandonment of Service by Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc. to the two inactive residential premises located in Shippenville, Clarion County, Pennsylvania is hereby approved.

2. That a Certificate of Public Convenience be issued pursuant to 66 Pa. C.S. § 1102(a)(2) authorizing Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc. to abandon natural gas distribution service to the two inactive residential premises located in Shippenville, Clarion County, Pennsylvania as discussed in the body of this Order.

¹ The Clarion News.

3. That within ten days following the abandonment of natural gas distribution service to two inactive residential premises, Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc. shall file a verified Notice of Abandonment with this Commission at Docket No. A-2024-3049172, containing the following information:

- (a) The completion date for the abandonment of gas service to the two inactive residential premises;
- (b) A statement explaining how compliance with 49 C.F.R. § 192.727 relating to abandonment or deactivation of facilities was completed; and
- (c) A copy of the verified Notice of Abandonment shall also be served upon the Gas Safety Division of this Commission's Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement.

4. That a copy of this Order shall be served upon Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc., the Commission's Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement – Gas Safety Division, the Office of Small Business Advocate, Office of Consumer Advocate, and the owners of the two inactive residential premises located in Shippenville, Clarion County, Pennsylvania.

5. That upon filing of the notice mentioned in Ordering Paragraph 3, above, that this case be marked closed.

BY THE COMMISSION,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rosemary Chiavetta". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rosemary Chiavetta

Secretary

(SEAL)

ORDER ADOPTED: August 1, 2024

ORDER ENTERED: August 1, 2024