

PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

William Petsch
v.
PPL Electric Utilities Corporation

Public Meeting held April 24, 2025
3041848-OSA
Docket No. C-2023-3041848

STATEMENT OF VICE CHAIR KIMBERLY BARROW

On July 19, 2023, William Petsch filed a Formal Complaint against PPL Electric Utilities Corporation (PPL) explaining that he handles maintenance of an estate property and that he is not responsible for the foreign load or bills associated with the foreign load. An evidentiary hearing was held on November 30, 2023. The service address in question is an estate property with four (4) apartment units. Apartment 1 includes the boiler/storage room in question and is approximately half of the building. A light and switch for the boiler, which only heats Apartment 1, are in the boiler/storage room, and the tenant is responsible for purchasing the oil for the boiler. The boiler/storage room is only accessible to the tenant of Apartment 1. Apartments 2, 3, and 4 have electrical heat.

PPL conducted a virtual inspection for foreign load on February 15, 2023. For a virtual inspection, which PPL has conducted since the COVID pandemic, a PPL employee uses Google Meet to call someone at the service address who then walks around and turns various items on while PPL remotely controls the power to the service address. In this case, the lights in the storage/boiler room were on and PPL, via Google Meet, observed the lights going off when they remotely shut the meter off. Deducing that the light was connected to the Apartment 1 meter, PPL transferred the account into Petsch's name. On February 17, 2023, Petsch self-reported that the water heater was connected to the Apartment 3 meter and PPL transferred the Apartment 3 account to Petsch. On February 18, the boiler/storage light and switch were removed from the Apartment 1 meter, Apartment 1's tenant's use of the room ended, and the water heater was removed from the Apartment 3 meter. Petsch called and faxed PPL to advise of the changes on February 19, 2023.

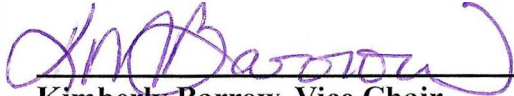
PPL mailed a Fix Form on February 27, 2023, which was returned to PPL on March 6 noting that the tenant refused to sign. PPL conducted two virtual reinvestigations on April 15 and April 24, respectively, and transferred the Apartment 1 account out of Petsch's name on April 24 and Apartment 3 account out of Petsch's name on June 8. Petsch asked PPL on multiple occasions to send a representative to inspect the building and meter situation, but no PPL personnel inspected the building in person.

An Initial Decision (ID) was issued on April 17, 2024. The Initial Decision granted, in part, and denied, in part, the Formal Complaint. Specifically, the ID found that PPL incorrectly transferred foreign load from Apartment 1 to Petsch and that PPL provided unreasonable service. All other claims were denied. The ID ordered PPL to remove the balance of \$1,997.76 and any associated late fees or interest from Petsch's account and assessed a civil penalty of \$2,500 against PPL. PPL filed Exceptions.

With the facts presented before us today, I support the Initial Decision's finding that PPL provided unreasonable service when it conducted a virtual foreign load investigation and failed to send a representative to the apartment building despite multiple requests for an in-person inspection. PPL's refusal to send a representative to the service address resulted in an incorrect transfer and a delay in correcting that transfer. At a minimum, if a PPL representative had visited the service address personally, they would have been in a better place to not only review the specific meter situation at Apartment 1, but also speak to the landlord and other tenants to learn of the heating situation. Additionally, if PPL would have visited the service address shortly after Petsch corrected the alleged and confirmed foreign load issue, then the account transfers would not have been delayed by 64 days (Apartment 1) or 109 days (Apartment 3).¹

I understand that PPL began completing virtual foreign load inspection as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and agree that offering a virtual inspection was in the public interest at that time. However, I question whether such a practice is prudent so many years after the end of the pandemic and whether it should continue on a majority of investigations moving forward.

April 24, 2025



Kimberly Barrow, Vice Chair

¹ The calculation includes from February 19, 2023, when PPL was advised of the corrections, to April 24, 2023 and June 8, 2023, respectively.