

**BEFORE THE  
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, et al.	:	R-2025-3052742
	:	
	:	
v.	:	
	:	
National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation	:	

**ORDER GRANTING PETITION FOR PROTECTIVE ORDER**

On March 21, 2025, National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation (NFG or Distribution) filed a Petition for Protective Order (Petition) pursuant to 52 Pa. Code § 5.365(a) in the above-captioned proceeding. In support of its Petition, NFG averred it has presented information during the course of the proceeding that is customarily treated as sensitive, proprietary and highly confidential. Petition at 2-3, ¶13. NFG further averred that in Paragraph 3 of its proposed Protective Order, “Confidential” is defined as “those materials which customarily are treated by that party as sensitive or proprietary, which are not available to the public, or which, if disclosed freely, would subject that party or others to risk of competitive disadvantage or other business injury,” and such information should be protected from disclosure. Petition at 3, ¶ 15.

Additionally, NFG averred that in Paragraph 4 of its proposed Protective Order, “Highly Confidential” is defined as “those materials that are of such a commercially sensitive or of such a private, personal nature that the producing party is able to justify a heightened level of confidential protection with respect to those materials.” Petition at 3, ¶ 15. NFG further asserted that the limitation on the disclosure of “Confidential” or “Highly Confidential” information will not prejudice the rights of the participants, nor will such limitation frustrate the prompt and fair resolution of this proceeding. Petition at 4, ¶ 17. NFG averred that its proposed Protective Order balances the interests of the parties, the public, and the Commission. Petition at 4, ¶ 17.

Moreover, the language in the proposed Protective Order provides as follows:

The parties shall retain the right to question or challenge the confidential or proprietary nature of Proprietary Information and to question or challenge the admissibility of Proprietary Information. If a party challenges the designation of a document or information as proprietary, the party providing the information retains the burden of demonstrating that the designation is appropriate.

Proposed Protective Order at ¶ 25.

In its Petition, NFG advised that it consulted with all other parties in this proceeding: the Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement (I&E), the Office of Consumer Advocate (OCA), and the Office of Small Business Advocate (OSBA), and no party objects to the granting of the Petition. Petition at 4, ¶ 19.

By the authority granted under 52 Pa. Code §§ 5.362(a) and 5.365, and noting that there is no objection from the active parties in this matter, I will grant NFG's Petition for Protective Order filed on March 21, 2025.

THEREFORE,

IT IS ORDERED THAT:

1. The Petition is hereby granted with respect to all materials and information identified in Paragraphs 3 and 4 below.
2. The materials subject to this Protective Order are all correspondence, documents, data, information, studies, methodologies, and other materials, furnished in this proceeding, whether produced or stored on paper, cards, tape, disk, film, electronic facsimile, magnetic or optical memory, computer storage devices or any other devices or media, including, but not limited to, electronic mail (e-mail), which are believed by the producing party to be of a proprietary or confidential nature and are so designated by being stamped "CONFIDENTIAL" or

“HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL” protected materials, as those are the two categories of Proprietary Information and therefore are protected material. Such materials are referred to below as “Proprietary Information.” When a statement or exhibit is identified for the record, the portions thereof that constitute Proprietary Information shall be designated as such for the record.

3. The parties may designate as “Confidential” those materials which customarily are treated by that party as sensitive or proprietary, which are not available to the public, or which, if disclosed freely, would subject that party or others to risk of competitive disadvantage or other business injury.

4. The parties may designate as “Highly Confidential” those materials that are of such a commercially sensitive or of such a private, personal nature that the producing party is able to justify a heightened level of confidential protection with respect to those materials. For example, but without limitation, “Highly Confidential” information may include Proprietary Information that constitutes or describes: (i) customer names or customer prospects’ names, addresses, annual volumes of gas usage, or other customer-identifying information; (ii) marketing plans; (iii) competitive strategies or service alternatives; (iv) market share projections; (v) competitive pricing or discounting information; and (vi) marketing materials that have not yet been used.

5. Proprietary Information shall be made available to counsel for the non-producing party, subject to the terms of this Protective Order. Such counsel shall use or disclose the Proprietary Information only for purposes of preparing or presenting evidence, cross examination, or argument or for settlement discussions in this proceeding. To the extent required for participation in this proceeding, counsel for a non-producing party may afford access to Proprietary Information subject to the conditions set forth herein.

6. Proprietary Information produced in this proceeding shall be made available to the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (“Commission”) and its Staff. For purposes of filing, to the extent that Proprietary Information is placed in the Commission’s report

folders, such information shall be handled in accordance with routine Commission procedures inasmuch as the report folders are not subject to public disclosure. To the extent that Proprietary Information is placed in the Commission's testimony or document folders, such information shall be separately bound, conspicuously marked, and accompanied by a copy of this Protective Order. Public inspection of Protected Information shall be permitted only in accordance with this Protective Order.

7. "Confidential" information may be made available to a "Reviewing Representative" who is a person who has signed a Non-Disclosure Certificate in the form attached as **Appendix A** hereto and who is: (i) an attorney for one of the parties who has entered an appearance in this proceeding; (ii) an attorney, paralegal, or other employee associated for purposes of this proceeding with an attorney described in subparagraph (i); (iii) an expert or an employee of an expert retained by a party for the purpose of advising, preparing for or testifying in this proceeding; (iv) an employee or other representative of a party with significant responsibility in this proceeding; or (v) a person mutually agreed to by the producing and non-producing parties. To the extent required for participation in this proceeding, such counsel may allow others to have access to Proprietary Information only in accordance with the conditions and limitations set forth in this Agreement.

8. Provided, however, that no Reviewing Representative may be a "Restricted Person." For the purpose of this Protective Order, "Restricted Person" shall mean: (i) an officer, director, stockholder, partner, or owner of any competitor of a party or an employee of such an entity if the employee's duties involve marketing or pricing of the competitor's products or services; (ii) an officer, director, stockholder, partner, or owner of any affiliate of a competitor of a party (including any association of competitors of a party) or an employee of such an entity if the employee's duties involve marketing or pricing of the competitor's products or services; (iii) an officer, director, stockholder, owner or employee of a competitor of a customer of a party if the Proprietary Information concerns any specific, identifiable customer of a party; and (iv) an officer, director, stockholder, owner or employee of an affiliate of a competitor of a customer of a party if the Proprietary Information concerns a

specific, identifiable customer of the party; provided, however, that no expert shall be disqualified on account of being a stockholder, partner, or owner unless that expert's interest in the business would provide a significant motive for violation of the limitations of permissible use of the Proprietary Information. For purposes of this Protective Order, stocks, partnership, or other direct ownership interests (excluding ownership in mutual funds) valued at more than \$10,000 or constituting more than a one percent interest in a business establishes a significant motive for violation. The Office of Small Business Advocate's ("OSBA") consultant, Mr. Mark Ewen, will not be considered "Restricted Person," provided that Mr. Ewen does not share, distribute, or discuss the Proprietary Information with any person except authorized OSBA representatives.

9. If an expert for a party to this Protective Order, another member of the expert's firm or the expert's firm also serves as an expert for, or as a consultant or advisor to, a Restricted Person, said expert must: (i) identify for the other party to this Protective Order each Restricted Person and each expert or consultant; (ii) make reasonable attempts to segregate those personnel assisting in the expert's participation in this proceeding from those personnel working on behalf of a Restricted Person; and (iii) if segregation of such personnel is impractical, the expert shall give to the producing party written assurances that the lack of segregation will in no way jeopardize the interests of the party or its customers. The parties retain the right to challenge the adequacy of the written assurances that the parties' or their customers' interests will not be jeopardized.

10. "Highly Confidential" information may be made available to a "Reviewing Representative" who has signed a Non-Disclosure Certificate in the form attached as **Appendix A** hereto and who is: (i) an attorney for one of the parties who has entered an appearance in this proceeding; (ii) an attorney, paralegal, or other employee associated for purposes of this proceeding with an attorney described in subparagraph (i); (iii) an expert or an employee of an expert retained by a party for the purpose of advising, preparing for or testifying in this proceeding; or (iv) a person mutually agreed to by the producing and non-producing parties.

11. Provided, however, that a Reviewing Representative of Highly Confidential information shall not be a “Restricted Person” as defined in Paragraph 8 or include any employee or agent of a customer of a party subject to this Protective Order, a competitor of a party subject to this Protective Order, or a competitor of a customer of a party subject to this Protective Order whose duties include: (i) the marketing, sale, or purchase of natural gas or natural gas transportation services; (ii) management regarding or supervision of any employee whose duties include the marketing, sale, or purchase of natural gas or natural gas transportation services for a competitor of a party subject to this Protective Order or a customer of the party; (iii) consulting services for a competitor of a party subject to this Protective Order or a customer of the party regarding the marketing, sale or purchase of natural gas or natural gas transportation services; or (iv) responsibility regarding other strategic business activities in which use of market sensitive information could be reasonably expected to cause competitive harm to a party or to a customer of a party subject to this Protective Order.

12. If any person who has had access to Proprietary Information subsequently is assigned to perform any duties which would make that person ineligible to be a Reviewing Representative of “Confidential” or “Highly Confidential” information, that person shall immediately inform the producing party of his or her new duties, shall dispose of any Proprietary Information and any information derived therefrom in his or her possession and shall continue to comply with the requirements of this Protective Order with regard to the Proprietary Information to which that person previously had access.

13. No other persons may have access to the Proprietary Information except as authorized by order of the Commission or the Presiding Administrative Law Judge.

14. Qualified “Reviewing Representatives of Highly Confidential” information may review and discuss “Highly Confidential” information with their client or with the entity with which they are employed or associated, to the extent that the client or entity is not a “Restricted Person,” but may not share with or permit the client or entity to review the “Highly Confidential” information. Such discussions must be general in nature and not disclose specific

“Highly Confidential” information; provided, however, that counsel for the Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement (“I&E”), Office of Consumer Advocate (“OCA”) and Office of Small Business Advocate (“OSBA”) may share Proprietary Information with the I&E Deputy Chief Prosecutor, I&E Director, Consumer Advocate, Deputy Consumer Advocate, and Small Business Advocate, respectively, without obtaining a Non-Disclosure Certificate from these individuals, provided that these individuals otherwise abide by the terms of the Protective Order.

15. Proprietary Information shall be treated by non-producing parties subject to this Protective Order and by all Reviewing Representatives in accordance with the certificate attached as **Appendix A** and executed pursuant to this Protective Order. Information deemed Proprietary Information shall not be used except as necessary for the conduct of this proceeding, nor shall it be disclosed in any manner to any person except a Reviewing Representative who is engaged in the conduct of this proceeding and who needs to know the information in order to carry out that person’s responsibilities in this proceeding.

16. That Reviewing Representatives may not use information contained in any Proprietary Information obtained through this proceeding to give any commercial advantage. If a party wishes to designate as a Reviewing Representative a person not described in Paragraphs 7 and 10 above, the party shall seek agreement from the party providing the Proprietary Information. If an agreement is reached, that person shall be a Reviewing Representative with respect to those materials. If no agreement is reached, the party shall submit the disputed designation to the presiding Administrative Law Judge for resolution.

17. That a Reviewing Representative shall not be permitted to inspect, participate in discussions regarding, or otherwise be permitted access to Proprietary Information pursuant to this Protective Order unless that Reviewing Representative has first executed a Non-Disclosure Certificate, provided that if an attorney qualified as a Reviewing Representative has executed such a certificate, the paralegals, secretarial and clerical personnel under the attorney’s instruction, supervision or control need not do so. A copy of each Non-Disclosure Certificate

shall be provided to counsel for the party asserting confidentiality prior to disclosure of any Proprietary Information to that Reviewing Representative.

18. That attorneys and outside experts qualified as Reviewing Representatives are responsible for ensuring that persons under their supervision or control comply with this Protective Order.

19. That none of the parties waive their right to pursue any other legal or equitable remedies that may be available in the event of actual or anticipated disclosure of Proprietary Information.

20. That the producing party shall designate data or documents as constituting or containing Proprietary Information by stamping the documents “Confidential” or “Highly Confidential.” Where only part of data compilations or multi-page documents constitutes or contains Proprietary Information, the parties, insofar as reasonably practicable within discovery and other time constraints imposed in this proceeding, shall designate only the specific data or pages of documents which constitute or contain Proprietary Information. The Proprietary Information shall be served in an envelope separate from the nonproprietary materials, and the envelope shall be conspicuously marked “Confidential” or “Highly Confidential.”

21. That the non-producing party will consider and treat the Proprietary Information as within the exemptions from disclosure provided in Section 335(d) of the Public Utility Code, 66 Pa. C.S. § 335(d), as applicable, and is within the definition of “confidential proprietary information” in the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law, Act of February 14, 2008, P.L. 6, 65 P.S. §§ 67.101-67.3104, until such time as the information is found to be non-proprietary. In the event that any person or entity seeks to compel the disclosure of Proprietary Information, the non-producing party shall promptly notify the producing party in order to provide the producing party an opportunity to oppose or limit such disclosure.

22. That any public reference to Proprietary Information by a party shall be to the title or exhibit reference in sufficient detail to permit persons with access to the Proprietary Information to understand fully the reference and not more. The Proprietary Information shall remain a part of the record, to the extent admitted, for all purposes of administrative or judicial review.

23. That, when a statement or exhibit is identified for the record, the portions thereof that constitute Proprietary Information shall be designated as such for the record.

24. That any part of the record of this proceeding containing Proprietary Information, including but not limited to all exhibits, writings, testimony, cross examination and argument, and including reference thereto as mentioned in Paragraph 22 above, shall be sealed for all purposes, including administrative and judicial review, unless such Proprietary Information is released from the restrictions of this Protective Order, either through the agreement of the parties subject to this Protective Order or pursuant to an order of the Commission.

25. That the parties shall retain the right to question or challenge the confidential or proprietary nature of Proprietary Information and to question or challenge the admissibility of Proprietary Information. If a party challenges the designation of a document or information as proprietary, the party providing the information retains the burden of demonstrating that the designation is appropriate.

26. That the parties shall retain the right to object to the production of Proprietary Information on any proper ground; to refuse to produce Proprietary Information pending the adjudication of the objection; and to seek additional measures of protection of Proprietary Information beyond those provided in this Protective Order.

27. That within 30 days after a Commission final order is entered in the above-captioned proceeding, or in the event of appeals, within 30 days after appeals are finally



**APPENDIX A**  
**BEFORE THE**  
**PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, *et al.* :  
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 v. : Docket Nos. R-2025-3052742, *et al.*  
 :  
 National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation :

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:**

The undersigned is a Reviewing Representative of the \_\_\_\_\_, a party to this proceeding (“Party), and is not or has no knowledge or basis for believing that he/she is a “Restricted Person” based upon reasonable knowledge and efforts as that term is defined in Paragraph 8 of the Protective Order, or prohibited from being a “Reviewing Representative of Highly Confidential information” pursuant to Paragraph 11 of the Protective Order. The undersigned has read and understands the Protective Order in the above-referenced proceeding, which Protective Order deals with the treatment of Proprietary Information. The undersigned agrees to be bound by, and comply with, the terms and conditions of said Protective Order.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employer

**R-2025-3052742 - PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION v. NATIONAL FUEL GAS DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION**

*Revised: February 26, 2025*

ANTHONY D KANAGY ESQUIRE  
NICHOLAS A STOBBE ESQUIRE  
17 NORTH SECOND ST 12TH FLOOR  
HARRISBURG PA 17101-1601

**717.612.6034**

**717.731.1985**

[akanagy@postschell.com](mailto:akanagy@postschell.com)

[nstobbe@postschell.com](mailto:nstobbe@postschell.com)

Served via eService May 9, 2025

*(Counsel for NFG)*

STEVEN C GRAY ESQUIRE  
OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS  
ADVOCATE  
FORUM PLACE  
555 WALNUT STREET 1ST FLOOR  
HARRISBURG PA 17101

**717.783.2525**

[sgray@pa.gov](mailto:sgray@pa.gov)

Served via email May 9, 2025

CARRIE B WRIGHT ESQUIRE  
PA PUC BUREAU OF  
INVESTIGATION & ENFORCEMENT  
SECOND FLOOR WEST  
400 NORTH STREET  
HARRISBURG PA 17120

**717-783-6156**

**717-787-4887**

[carwright@pa.gov](mailto:carwright@pa.gov)

Served via eService May 9, 2025

HARRISON W BREITMAN ESQUIRE  
KATHERINE M KENNEDY ESQUIRE  
OFFICE OF CONSUMER ADVOCATE  
555 WALNUT STREET 5TH FLOOR  
FORUM PLACE  
HARRISBURG PA 17101

**717-780-4517**

[hbreitman@paoca.org](mailto:hbreitman@paoca.org)

[kkennedy@paoca.org](mailto:kkennedy@paoca.org)

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