

**BEFORE THE
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission	:	R-2025-3053499
Office of Small Business Advocate	:	C-2025-3054550
Office of Consumer Advocate	:	C-2025-3054484
The Pennsylvania University	:	C-2025-3054780
Terri Walker	:	C-2025-3054662
Linda Slick	:	C-2025-3054552
Linda Allison	:	C-2025-3054434
Alexandra Garlitz	:	C-2025-3055233

v.

Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc

INTERIM ORDER
GRANTING MOTION FOR A PROTECTIVE ORDER

On March 20, 2025, Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc. (Columbia or the Company) filed Supplement No. 392 to Tariff Gas Pa. P.U.C. No. 9 with the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (Commission). The Company proposed increasing rates to produce additional overall revenues of \$110.5 million per year, a 12.0% increase in the overall distribution revenue requirement.

Under the Company's proposal, the total bill for a residential customer purchasing 70 therms per month would increase from \$138.52 to \$154.29, an increase of \$15.77 or 11.38%. The Company proposed increasing the monthly residential customer charge from \$17.25 to \$31.97, an increase of \$14.72 or 85.3%. Additionally, the filing requests approval for Columbia to convert its pilot Weather Normalization Adjustment (WNA) into a permanent program, implement a Revenue Normalization Adjustment (RNA), and introduce an Economic Development Distribution Service tariff, and renew its residential energy efficiency program and establish a new commercial energy efficiency program.

On March 24, 2025, the Commission's Bureau of Investigation & Enforcement (I&E) filed a Notice of Appearance.

On 3/28/25, Linda Allison filed a Complaint at C-2025-3054434

On April 8, 2025, the Office of Consumer Advocate (OCA) filed a Formal Complaint, Public Statement, and Notice of Appearance at C-2025-3054484.

On 4/11/25, the Office of Small Business Advocate filed a Complaint at C-2025-3054550.

On 4/11/25, Linda Slick filed a Complaint at C-2025-3054552.

On 4/11/25 the Coalition for Affordable Utility Services and Energy Efficiency in Pennsylvania (CAUSE-PA) filed a Petition to Intervene.

On 4/17/25, Terri Walker filed a Complaint at C-2025-3054662.

On 4/24/25, Pennsylvania State University filed a Complaint at C-2025-3054780.

On April 24, 2025, a Prehearing Conference Order and a Prehearing Conference Notice were issued scheduling a telephonic Prehearing Conference for May 7, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.

On April 28, 2025, Columbia filed its Supplement No. 399 to Tariff Gas Pa. P.U.C. No. 9, pursuant to the Commission's April 24, 2025, Order suspending the proposed rates and rules contained in Supplement No. 392 to Tariff Gas Pa. P.U.C. No. 9 until December 19, 2025.

On 5/5/25, the Pennsylvania Weatherization Providers Task Force (Task Force) filed a Petition to Intervene.

The Prehearing Conference was convened as scheduled. Counsel for Columbia, I&E, OCA and OSBA appeared, as well as the Pennsylvania State University, CAUSE-PA, Task Force. (collectively, Parties). Linda Slick, an individual Complainant also attended the conference.

On May 9, 2025, a Prehearing Order was entered consolidating the complaints of the statutory advocates and the Pennsylvania State University, Terri Walker, Linda Slick, and Linda Allsion are consolidated with the above-docketed rate proceeding. In addition, the Petitions to Intervene filed by CAUSE-PA and the Pennsylvania Weatherization Providers Task Force were granted. The litigation schedule was also established.

In addition, it was ordered that an in-person public input hearing was tentatively scheduled for 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. on June 3, 2025, at the Washington County Crossroads Center, 95 West Beau Street, Washington, Pennsylvania, and that public input hearings by telephone were tentatively scheduled for June 4, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. The Parties were subsequently informed that an additional in-person public input hearing would be scheduled in York, PA on June 11, 2025, at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m.

On May 14, 2025, an Interim Order was entered modifying the litigation schedule to permit supplemental direct testimony related to the York public input hearing. In addition, additional in-person public input hearings were scheduled for to be held in York Pennsylvania on June 11, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

On June 9, 2025, Columbia filed a Motion for A Protective Order. Columbia averred that the Parties to this proceeding have engaged, and continue to engage, in substantial formal discovery and that proprietary information within the definition of 52 Pa. Code § 5.365 has been shared in discovery pursuant to protective agreements between the parties. In addition, Columbia averred that proprietary information has been, or may be, included in testimony, which may be introduced for the record in this proceeding. Columbia averred that the treatment of such information as set forth in the proposed Protective Order is justified because unrestricted disclosure of this information would not be of public interest and that these considerations

constitute cause for the restrictions specified in 52 Pa. Code § 5.365 and in Administrative Law Judge or Commission Orders granting relief pursuant to the regulation.

Under 52 Pa. Code §§ 5.362(a)(7) and 5.365, the Office of Administrative Law Judge or the Commission may issue a Protective Order to limit or prohibit disclosure of Proprietary Information where the potential harm to a participant would be substantial and outweighs the public's interest in having access to proprietary information. In applying this standard, relevant factors to be considered include: the extent to which disclosure would cause unfair economic or competitive damage; the extent to which the information may already be known by others; and the potential value of such information to the participant and the participant's competitors and trade partners. 52 Pa. Code §§ 5.365(a)(1) – (3).

Columbia has also averred that the documents sought to be protected by its proposed order also may contain proprietary information as described in 66 Pa. C.S. § 335(d), which provides:

if a document contains trade secrets or proprietary information and it has been determined by the commission that harm to the person claiming the privilege would be substantial or if a document required to be released under this section contains identifying information which would operate to the prejudice or impairment of a person's reputation or personal security, or information that would lead to the disclosure of a confidential source or subject a person to potential economic retaliation as a result of their cooperation with a commission investigation, or information which, if disclosed to the public, could be used for criminal or terroristic purposes, the identifying information may be expurgated from the copy of the document made part of the public record.

Columbia has also averred that no party has indicated that it opposed the proposed Protective Order. Under the circumstances, it appears that treatment of such information as set forth in the proposed Protective Order is justified under 66 Pa.C.S. § 335(d). Accordingly, Columbia's Motion for A Protective Order will be granted and the protective order attached to its Motion will be adopted.

THEREFORE,

IT IS ORDERED THAT:

1. The Motion for A Protective Order filed by Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc., is hereby granted with respect to all materials and information identified in Paragraphs 2 and 3 below, which are or will be filed with the Commission, produced in discovery, or otherwise presented during the above-captioned proceeding and all proceedings consolidated with it. All people now or hereafter granted access to the materials and information identified in Paragraphs 2 and 3 of this Protective Order shall use and disclose such information only in accordance with this Order.

2. The information subject to this Protective Order is all correspondence, documents, data, information, studies, methodologies and other materials, furnished in discovery in this proceeding, as well as written and oral testimony, exhibits, examination and cross-examination questions, motions, briefs, oral argument, and other writings submitted by the parties to this proceeding, which are believed by the producing party to be of a proprietary or confidential nature and which are so designated by being stamped “CONFIDENTIAL” or “HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL.” Such materials will be 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. This Protective Order applies to the following categories of materials: (A) 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, and which, if disclosed freely, would subject that party or its clients to risk of competitive disadvantage or other business injury; (B)

the parties may designate as “HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL” those materials that are of such a commercially sensitive nature among the parties 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: (a) customer names or customer prospects’ names, addresses, annual volumes of gas usage, or other customer-identifying information; (b) marketing plans; (c) competitive strategies or service alternatives; (d) market share projections; (e) competitive pricing or discounting information; and (f) marketing materials that have not yet been used. The parties shall endeavor to limit their designation of information as “HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL.”

4. Proprietary Information shall be made available to counsel for a party who has entered an appearance in this proceeding and does not have responsibilities constituting a Restricted Person, 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, argument, or settlement discussions in this proceeding. To the extent required for participation in this proceeding, counsel for a party may afford access to Proprietary Information subject to the conditions set forth in this Protective Order.

5. Information deemed as “CONFIDENTIAL”, shall be made available to a “Reviewing Representative” who is a person who has signed a Non-Disclosure Certificate as identified in Appendix A attached 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 5(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 parties.

6. Information deemed as “HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL”, may be provided to a “Reviewing Representative” who has signed a Non-Disclosure Certificate as identified in Appendix A attached 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 6(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 parties.

Provided, further, that in accordance with the provisions of Sections 5.362 and 5.365(e) of the Commission’s Rules of Practice and Procedure, 52 Pa. Code §§ 5.362, 5.365(e), any party may, by subsequent objection or motion, seek further protection with respect to “HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL” material, including, but not limited to, total prohibition of disclosure or limitation of disclosure only to particular parties.

7. For purposes of this Protective Order, a Reviewing Representative may not be a “Restricted Person.”

(a) A “Restricted Person” shall mean: (i) an officer, director, stockholder, partner, or owner of any competitor of the parties 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 the parties (including any association of competitors of the parties) 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 the parties if the Proprietary Information concerns a specific, identifiable customer of the parties; and (iv) an officer, director, stockholder, owner or employee of an affiliate of a competitor of a customer of the parties if the Proprietary Information concerns a specific, identifiable customer of the parties; 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 ownership interests valued at more than \$10,000 or constituting more than a 1% interest in a business establish a significant motive for violation.

(b) If an expert for a party, another member of the expert’s firm or the expert’s firm generally also serves as an expert for, or as a consultant or advisor to, a Restricted Person, said expert must: (i) identify for the parties 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 parties or their 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. No other person may have access to Proprietary Information except as authorized by the order of the Commission.

(c) The Office of Small Business Advocate's ("OSBA") consultant, Mr. Mark Ewen, will not be considered a "Restricted Person" and Paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b) will not apply to Mr. Ewen, provided that Mr. Ewen does not share, distribute, or discuss the Proprietary Information with any person except authorized OSBA representatives.

(d) The Coalition for Affordable Utility Services and Energy Efficiency in Pennsylvania (CAUSE-PA) consultant, Ms. Alice Napoleon will not be considered a "Restricted Person" and Paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b) will not apply to Ms. Napoleon, provided that Ms. Napoleon does not share, distribute, or discuss the Proprietary Information with any person except authorized CAUSE-PA representatives.

8. A qualified "Reviewing Representative" for "HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL" material may review and discuss "HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL" material 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," material provided however that counsel for the Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement, the Office of Consumer Advocate, and Office of Small Business Advocate may share Proprietary Information with the I&E Director, Consumer Advocate, Deputy Consumer Advocate, and Small Business Advocate, respectively, without obtaining a Non-Disclosure Certificate from these individuals, provided however, that these individuals otherwise abide by the terms of the Protective Order.

9. Proprietary Information shall be treated by the parties and by the Reviewing Representative in accordance with the certificate executed pursuant to Paragraph 11(a). 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.

10. Reviewing Representatives may not use information contained in any Proprietary Information obtained through this proceeding to give any party or any competitor of any party a commercial advantage. In the event that a Party wishes to designate as a Reviewing

Representative a person not described in Paragraphs 5(i) through 5(iv) or 6(i) through 6(iii) 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 pursuant to Paragraph 5(v) or 6(iv) above with respect to those materials. If no agreement is reached, the party shall submit the disputed designation to the presiding Administrative Law Judges for a resolution.

11. (a) 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 as identified in Appendix A attached hereto, 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 disclosing any Proprietary Information to the Reviewing Representative.

(b) Attorneys and outside experts qualified as the Reviewing Representatives are responsible for ensuring that people under their supervision or control comply with the Protective Order.

12. 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.

13. The parties 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 upon the parties hereto separate from the nonproprietary materials and shall be conspicuously marked "CONFIDENTIAL" or "HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL."

14. The 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), and the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Act, Act of February 14, 2008, P.L. 6, 65 P.S. §§ 67.101 *et seq.*, until such time as the information is found to be non-proprietary.

15. Any public reference to Proprietary Information by a party or its Reviewing Representatives shall be to the title or exhibit reference in sufficient detail to permit people with access to Proprietary Information to understand fully the reference and not more. Proprietary Information shall remain a part of the record, to the extent admitted, for all purposes of administrative or judicial review.

16. Part of any record of this proceeding containing Proprietary Information, including but not limited to all exhibits, writings, testimony, cross examination, argument, and responses to discovery, and including reference thereto as mentioned in Paragraph 15 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 to this proceeding or pursuant to an order of the Commission.

17. 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.

18. The parties shall retain the right to question or challenge the admissibility of Proprietary Information; to object to the production of Proprietary Information on any proper ground; and to refuse to produce Proprietary Information pending the adjudication of the objection.

19. Within 30 days after a Commission final order is entered in the above-captioned proceeding, or in the event of appeals, within thirty days after appeals are finally decided, the party, upon request, shall either destroy or return to the parties all copies of all documents and other materials not entered into the record, including notes, which contain any Proprietary Information. In the event that the party elects to destroy all copies of documents and other materials containing Proprietary Information instead of returning the copies of documents and other materials containing Proprietary Information to the parties, the party shall certify in writing to the other Party that the Proprietary Information has been destroyed.

Dated: June 26, 2025

_____/s/
Jeffrey A. Watson
Administrative Law Judge

Dated: June 26, 2025

_____/s/
Chad Allensworth
Administrative Law Judge

APPENDIX A

Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission	:	R-2025-3053499
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v.

Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc

NON-DISCLOSURE CERTIFICATE

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” as that term is defined in Paragraph 7 of the Protective Order executed on behalf of the Party with regard to the above-referenced proceeding or prohibited from being a “Reviewing Representative of Highly Confidential information” pursuant to Paragraph 8 of the Protective Order. The undersigned has read and understands the Protective Order in the above-referenced proceeding, which 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.

- The undersigned is eligible to receive confidential materials.
- The undersigned is eligible to receive highly confidential materials.

Name

Address

Signature

Employer

**R-2025-3053499 - PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION v. COLUMBIA
GAS OF PENNSYLVANIA INC**

Revised 5/30/2025

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