

**PENNSYLVANIA  
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265**

Public Meeting held October 9, 2025.

Commissioners Present:

Stephen M. DeFrank, Chairman, Statement

Kimberly Barrow, Vice Chair

Kathryn L. Zerfuss

John F. Coleman, Jr., Statement, Concurring in Part and Dissenting in Part, Dissenting

Ralph V. Yanora, Dissenting

Peoples Natural Gas Company LLC

M-2018-3003177

Universal Service and Energy

Conservation Plan for 2019-2024

Peoples Gas Company LLC Universal and

M-2020-3021343

Energy Conservation Plan for 2019-2024

Petition of Peoples Natural Gas Company

P-2024-3052324

LLC – to Amend 2019-2023 Universal

Service and Energy Conservation Plan

**ORDER**

**BY THE COMMISSION**

Before the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (Commission or PUC) for consideration and disposition on the merits is the May 9, 2025 Petition for Reconsideration and/or Clarification filed by the Coalition for Affordable Utility Service and Energy Efficiency in Pennsylvania (CAUSE-PA) (CAUSE-PA Petition). CAUSE-PA seeks reconsideration of the Commission’s April 24, 2025 Order (April 2025 Order) denying the December 11, 2024 Petition of Peoples Natural Gas Company LLC (Peoples) to amend its Universal Service and Energy Conservation Plan for 2019-2024

(2019 USECP) at the above-captioned dockets (Peoples Petition). With this Order, the Commission grants in part and denies in part the CAUSE-PA Petition.

## BACKGROUND

On December 29, 2023, Peoples filed for a general rate increase at Docket No. R-2023-3044549 (2024 Rate Case proceeding). On May 30, 2024, Peoples, the Commission’s Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement, the Office of Small Business Advocate, People’s Industrial Intervenors, and Pennsylvania Independent Oil & Gas Association filed a Joint Petition for Non-Unanimous Settlement (2024 Joint Petition). The 2024 Joint Petition incorporated the provisions of a Low-Income Stipulation<sup>1</sup> – filed separately at the docket on May 30, 2024 – in which Peoples agreed to, *inter alia*, file a Petition with the Commission within 90 days after entry of a final Order in the 2024 Rate Case proceeding seeking authorization to amend its 2019 USECP “to initiate auto-enrollment of LIHEAP recipients with significant balances into Customer Assistance Program (CAP), to permit auto-recertification, and to waive income documentation requirements for CAP applicants who have received [a Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) grant] in the last two years.” The parties to the Low-Income Stipulation were not bound to take a position on this future Petition. Low-Income Stipulation at ¶6.

The Low-Income Stipulation also proposed to amend the language in Peoples’ tariff to state that “customers will automatically be enrolled in CAP if: a. the customer has a significant account balance, and b. the customer has received a LIHEAP payment within the past two years.” Low-Income Stipulation at ¶15. This is a change from Peoples’ previous tariff language, which stated “customers will automatically be enrolled

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<sup>1</sup> The parties to the Low-Income Stipulation included Peoples, CAUSE-PA, and the Pennsylvania Weatherization Providers Task Force.

in CAP if: a. the customer has defaulted on a payment arrangement, and b. the customer has received a LIHEAP payment within the past two years.”<sup>2</sup>

On July 15, 2024, the Office of the Administrative Law Judge issued a Recommended Decision, which recommended adopting the 2024 Joint Petition and the Low-Income Stipulation without modification (July 2024 RD). On September 12, 2024, the Commission entered an Opinion and Order adopting the July 2024 RD.

On December 11, 2024, Peoples filed its Petition to Amend its USECP and a redlined version of Peoples 2019 USECP at Docket No. M-2020-3021343 (Peoples Petition). Consistent with the terms of the Low-Income Stipulation in its 2024 Rate Case proceeding, Peoples requested approval to automatically enroll customers in its CAP if they have an account balance exceeding \$300 and have received a LIHEAP grant within the past two years, permit auto-recertification of LIHEAP recipients, and waive income documentation for LIHEAP recipients who received LIHEAP in the past two years. Peoples Petition at 3.

CAUSE-PA and the Office of Consumer Advocate (OCA) filed separate letters instead of an Answer on December 20 and December 24, respectively, noting their support for approval of the Peoples Petition. December 20 CAUSE-PA Letter at 1-2 and December 24 OCA Letter at 1.

On April 24, 2025, the Commission entered an Order denying the Peoples Petition. On May 9, 2025, CAUSE-PA filed its Petition requesting reconsideration and/or clarification of the April 2025 Order. Specifically, the CAUSE-PA Petition requested that the Commission direct Peoples to consult with interested parties

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<sup>2</sup> Peoples ‘No. 2 to Gas – PA PUC No. 47, (effective October 1, 2023), at First Revised page 37. [https://www.peoples-gas.com/my-account/understand/files/gas-rates-files/Peoples\\_Pending\\_Retail\\_Tariff.pdf](https://www.peoples-gas.com/my-account/understand/files/gas-rates-files/Peoples_Pending_Retail_Tariff.pdf).

(stakeholders) and submit an amended Petition within 90 days of entry of a final order in this proceeding. CAUSE-PA Petition at 1.

On May 9, 2025, OCA filed a letter instead of an Answer noting its support for the CAUSE-PA Petition. May 9 OCA Letter at 1.

On May 22, 2025, the Commission entered an Order granting CAUSE-PA's Petition for Reconsideration and/or Clarification pending review of, and consideration on, the merits of the CAUSE-PA Petition.

### **STANDARD FOR RECONSIDERATION**

CAUSE-PA timely filed the CAUSE-PA Petition requesting reconsideration of the April 2025 Order. Commission jurisdiction in this matter was preserved by the May 2025 Order, pursuant to Rule 1701 of the Pennsylvania Rules of Appellate Procedure.

Under the Public Utility Code, a party to a proceeding before the Commission, such as CAUSE-PA, has the right to seek relief from a Commission Order. *See* 66 Pa.C.S. § 703(g) (relating to the rescission and amendment of orders).<sup>3</sup> Such a request for relief must be consistent with Commission regulations. *See* 52 Pa. Code § 5.572 (relating to petitions for relief following the issuance of a final decision).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Section 703(g), 66 Pa. C.S. § 703(g), provides that “[t]he commission may, at any time, after notice and after opportunity to be heard as provided in this chapter, rescind or amend any order made by it. Any order rescinding or amending a prior order shall, when served upon the person, corporation, or municipal corporation affected, and after notice thereof is given to the other parties to the proceedings, have the same effect as is herein provided for original orders.”

<sup>4</sup> Section 5.572(a), 52 Pa. Code § 5.572(a), provides that “[p]etitions for rehearing, reargument, reconsideration, clarification, rescission, amendment, supersedeas or the like must be in writing and specify, in numbered paragraphs, the findings or orders involved, and the points relied upon by petitioner, with appropriate record references and specific requests for the findings or orders desired.”

The standards for granting a Petition for Reconsideration were set forth in *Duick v. PGW*, 56 Pa. PUC 553 (1982) (*Duick*):

A petition for reconsideration, under the provisions of 66 Pa. C.S. § 703(g), may properly raise any matters designed to convince the Commission that it should exercise its discretion to rescind or amend a prior Order in whole or in part. In this regard, we agree with the Court in the *Pennsylvania Railroad Company* case, wherein it was stated that “[p]arties . . . cannot be permitted by a second motion to review and reconsider, to raise the same questions which were specifically decided against them . . .” What we expect to see raised in such petitions are new and novel arguments, not previously heard, or considerations which appear to have been overlooked by the Commission.

*Duick*, 56 Pa. P.U.C.at 558. Under the standards of *Duick*, a Petition for Reconsideration and/or Clarification may properly raise any matter designed to convince the Commission that it should exercise its discretion to amend or rescind a prior Order, in whole or in part. However, such a Petition is likely to succeed only when it raises “new and novel arguments” not previously heard or considerations which appear to have been overlooked by the Commission. *Duick*, 56 Pa. PUC at 558.

The Commission has administrative discretion regarding whether to grant or deny a Petition for clarification or reconsideration of an Order filed under 66 Pa.C.S. § 703(g). *West Penn Power Co. v. Pa. Pub. Util. Comm’n*, 659 A.2d 1055, 1065 (Pa. Cmwlth. 1995). However, such a Petition should only be granted judiciously and under appropriate circumstances because such an action results in the disturbance of a final Order. *Id.* As such, the Commission has wide latitude to deny a Petition for clarification or reconsideration, and its decision will not be overturned by an appellate court absent a showing that the Commission abused its discretion. *Id.*

## DISCUSSION

CAUSE-PA has articulated several alleged issues in the Petition related to the Commission's April 2025 Order denying the Peoples Petition. CAUSE-PA alleges the April 2025 Order:

1. Overlooked the factual basis and tariff language;
2. Relied on unsupported assertions without due process;
3. Misconstrued Peoples' proposal;
4. Proposed usage of Hardship Fund grants in place of CAP enrollment; and
5. Violated due process in denying the uncontested Peoples Petition.

We shall address each issue individually.

*1. Overlooked factual basis and tariff language*

CAUSE-PA asserts that the April 2025 Order overlooked Peoples' existing tariff language, which explicitly requires automatic enrollment of LIHEAP recipients with significant arrears into CAP. Furthermore, CAUSE-PA asserts that the April 2025 Order also overlooked data indicating under-enrollment of low-income customers in Peoples' CAP, with only 20% of eligible households enrolled as of January 2024 and a 13% decline in enrollment since 2019. CAUSE-PA Petition at 9.

CAUSE-PA argues that the Commission's denial of Peoples' proposal effectively forces Peoples to remain noncompliant with its Commission-approved tariff and without a means to address its current CAP under-enrollment. CAUSE-PA urges the Commission to reconsider its denial of the Peoples Petition and require Peoples to collaborate with stakeholders and file an amended Petition within 90 days of a final order

in this proceeding to bring its practices into compliance with its tariff and expand access to assistance for vulnerable customers. CAUSE-PA Petition at 10-11.

*Resolution:*

We acknowledge that Peoples’ previous and current tariffs contain language referencing automatic CAP enrollment for payment troubled LIHEAP recipients. However, since 2009, Peoples’ USECPs have not included an automatic enrollment policy or procedure for CAP.<sup>5</sup> We also note that the implementation of Peoples’ CAP auto-enrollment provision identified in its 2024 tariff was contingent upon the Commission’s review and approval of the Peoples Petition, as required by the Low-Income Stipulation. Although the tariff language was not addressed as part of the Commission’s consideration of the Peoples Petition, it would not have negated the concerns raised by the Commission in its April 25 Order.

Nevertheless, we agree with CAUSE-PA that Peoples USECP must align with its approved tariff. Therefore, we approve CAUSE-PA’s request for reconsideration on this issue.

Accordingly, we direct Peoples to consult with interested stakeholders and submit an amended Petition to Amend its USECP within 90 days of the entry date of this Order that addresses the Commission’s concerns as cited in the April 2025 Order and that aligns with its approved tariff.

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<sup>5</sup> In its 2006-2008 USECP, Peoples (then known as Peoples Dominion) stated that “A ratepayer will automatically be enrolled in CAP if he/she has defaulted on a payment arrangement and has received a LIHEAP payment within the past two years.” Dominion Peoples 2006-2008 USECP, Docket No. M-00051880 (filed on September 14, 2005), at 7. In its 2009-2011 USECP, Peoples amended this policy to require customer contact/consent before enrolling these customers into CAP: “Upon contact by a ratepayer, he or she may be enrolled in CAP if he/she has defaulted on a payment arrangement and has received a LIHEAP payment within the past two years.” Dominion Peoples 2009-2011 USECP, Docket No. M-2008-2044646 (filed on June 2, 2008) at 8. Requiring customer consent from LIHEAP recipients before enrolling them in CAP has remained an enforced policy through Peoples current USECP (i.e. 2019-2024). *See* Peoples 2019-2024 USECP, Docket Nos. M-2018-3003177 and M-2020-3021343 (filed on November 26, 2024) at 7.

2. *Reliance on unsupported assertions without due process*

CAUSE-PA contends that the April 2025 Order relied on unsupported and inaccurate claims, specifically that income data provided by the Department of Human Services (DHS) to determine LIHEAP eligibility could be up to four years old. CAUSE-PA explains that LIHEAP applicants must submit income documentation for either the 12 months preceding the application month or the calendar month immediately preceding the application month, as specified in the LIHEAP regulation 55 Pa. Code § 601.83. CAUSE-PA argues that, while DHS may use data already on file for recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Medicaid, this data is verified through multiple mechanisms to ensure accuracy and timeliness. Specifically, CAUSE-PA notes that Medicaid income must be verified annually under 42 CFR § 435.916(a), and DHS supplements this process with third-party verification sources, such as the Federal Data Source Hub. CAUSE-PA Petition at 12-14.

CAUSE-PA asserts that in the rare cases where LIHEAP applicants are also SNAP recipients and all household members are elderly or permanently disabled, some income verification may be older than 12 months. However, CAUSE-PA argues that even in those situations, DHS utilizes safeguards such as semi-annual reporting (SAR) and electronic exchanges with the Social Security Administration to maintain up-to-date income information. CAUSE-PA emphasizes that these exceptions are narrowly defined and do not justify the broad and unsupported conclusion made by the Commission in the April 2025 Order. CAUSE-PA Petition at 13-14.

Additionally, CAUSE-PA contends that the Commission's claim is procedurally flawed because it was not part of the record, and the Commission didn't notify or allow parties to respond, thereby violating 52 Pa. Code § 5.408 of the Commission's

regulations. CAUSE-PA notes that Section 5.408 explicitly requires that, when official notice is taken of facts not on the record, parties must be notified and given a chance to rebut or present alternative facts. CAUSE-PA contends that this standard was not met in this proceeding. CAUSE-PA submits that no prior notice was given that the Commission would rely on extra-record facts related to DHS income verification timelines, and the parties were not allowed to contest those claims. CAUSE-PA Petition at 12-14.

CAUSE-PA argues that the Commission not only erred in its factual conclusions but also violated due process rights by issuing a final Order without allowing stakeholders to respond. CAUSE-PA urges the Commission to correct this legal and procedural error by reconsidering its decision and directing Peoples to file an amended Petition within 90 days of the entry date of this Order after consulting with stakeholders. CAUSE-PA Petition at 14-15.

*Resolution:*

CAUSE-PA correctly notes that federal Medicaid regulations, specifically 42 CFR § 435.916(a), require annual verification for Medicaid recipients. The Commission acknowledges that it erred in citing income for Medicaid recipients as an example of income accepted for LIHEAP eligibility that may not have been verified within 12 months. However, this fact does not invalidate the Commission's concerns about the verification date of income used to qualify a household for a LIHEAP grant. As CAUSE-PA noted, SNAP recipients in specific cases may have verified income that is more than 12 months old and, in some instances, SNAP recipients' income can be up to 36 months old.<sup>6</sup> While CAUSE-PA contends that these cases are limited and adequately

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<sup>6</sup> The SNAP Handbook states that households in which all members are elderly or disabled with no earned income will be assigned a 36-month recertification period. Households in which all adults members are elderly or disabled (regardless of income) will be assigned a 24-month recertification period. See DHS SNAP Handbook at 575.2.

[http://services.dpw.state.pa.us/oimpolicymanuals/snap/index.htm#t=575\\_Certification\\_Periods%2F575\\_2\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_Certification\\_Periods.htm&rhsearch=36&rhlterm=36](http://services.dpw.state.pa.us/oimpolicymanuals/snap/index.htm#t=575_Certification_Periods%2F575_2_Guidelines_for_Certification_Periods.htm&rhsearch=36&rhlterm=36).

safeguarded by mechanisms such as SAR, the Commission cannot determine with certainty how frequently these exceptions occur and whether the electronic exchanges maintained by DHS verify changes in all types of unearned income.

Recently, the Commission addressed the maximum timeframe LIHEAP income data could be used for universal service enrollments in its June 13, 2024 Order at Docket No. M-2023-3038944 (LIHEAP Data Sharing Order). In this Order, the Commission allowed public utilities to use LIHEAP data for CAP enrollment and recertification that has been verified by DHS within the past 12 months or the current or prior LIHEAP season. LIHEAP Data Sharing Order at 3.

We acknowledge that 52 Pa. Code § 5.408 requires parties to be notified and given a chance to respond if the Commission relies on facts not included in the record, as noted by CAUSE-PA.<sup>7</sup> The Commission's determinations in the April 2025 Order relied on existing PUC/DHS policy and prior Commission decisions, which are not extra-record facts subject to the requirements of Section 5.408 of the Commission's regulations. Even assuming that they were extra-record evidence, CAUSE-PA, as well as the OCA, have provided comment on these facts with their Petition, which the Commission's regulations also provide for, making the error harmless. Thus, CAUSE-PA's request for reconsideration on this issue is denied.

### *3. Misconstruction of Peoples' proposal*

CAUSE-PA argues that the Commission fundamentally misconstrued the nature of Peoples' proposal by conflating it with outdated utility practices that relied solely on receipt of a LIHEAP grant to auto-enroll customers in CAP without verifying income. CAUSE-PA argues Peoples' current proposal is entirely distinct and reflects the

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<sup>7</sup> 52 Pa. Code § 5.408(b)-(c).

advancements made through the new DHS LIHEAP data sharing policy, which allows utilities to access detailed, verified household income and composition data for consenting LIHEAP recipients. CAUSE-PA Petition Attachment A at Rider 1. CAUSE-PA contends that Peoples' proposal seeks to use this data, shared directly by DHS, to automate both enrollment and recertification in CAP, not to bypass income verification altogether. CAUSE-PA states that Peoples intends to utilize weekly DHS LIHEAP data reports to identify accounts with high arrearages and automatically enroll eligible customers. CAUSE-PA also notes that Peoples' proposal would use a separate "look-back" process to identify customers who received a LIHEAP grant in the past two years but are not enrolled in CAP, thereby ensuring an additional layer of enrollment opportunity. CAUSE-PA Petition at 14-16.

CAUSE-PA submits that, contrary to the Commission's claim that Peoples seeks to modify its recertification process by waiving documentation of a LIHEAP recipient's household income indefinitely, Peoples' proposal meets existing recertification requirements by using income verified by DHS. CAUSE-PA asserts that this process reduces administrative duplication and does not ignore eligibility rules. CAUSE-PA notes that the Commission's concerns appear to be rooted in the 2019 CAP Policy Statement, which predates the DHS LIHEAP data sharing process and does not reflect current policy. CAUSE-PA Petition at 17-18.

CAUSE-PA urges the Commission to direct Peoples to collaborate with stakeholders and file a revised Petition within 90 days. CAUSE-PA Petition at 18-19.

*Resolution:*

Contrary to CAUSE-PA's assertion that the April 2025 Order conflated Peoples' proposal with outdated practices and misunderstood its intent, the Commission evaluated Peoples' filing based on its specific requests. As detailed in the Peoples Petition, Peoples sought approval to implement auto-enrollment for residential customers with balances

exceeding \$300 who received a LIHEAP grant within the past two years using a two-pronged strategy: (1) A weekly report to identify LIHEAP recipients not currently enrolled in CAP, who would then be automatically enrolled based on their account balance; and (2) A “look-back” query to capture customers who received LIHEAP payments at any point within the prior two years but were not yet in CAP. Additionally, Peoples proposed auto-recertification for customers that received a LIHEAP grant on an active CAP account within two years or through LIHEAP data sharing information. In both cases, Peoples proposed an option for a household to update household income information through verbal attestation. Peoples Petition at 6-8.

CAUSE-PA argues that the Commission misunderstood this request by incorrectly suggesting that Peoples sought to waive income documentation “indefinitely.” CAUSE-PA Petition at 17-18, citing the April 2025 Order at 13. However, this statement overlooks the plain language of Peoples’ Proposed Amended USECP, which explicitly stated, “applicants must provide proof of household income when applying for the CAP program unless they have received a LIHEAP grant within the prior two years.” Proposed Amended USECP at 9. It further stated, “[w]hen LIHEAP has been received in the past two years of the recertification date, recertification occurs automatically and no action by the customer is necessary to remain active in CAP.” Proposed Amended USECP at 10. Notably, the Proposed Amended USECP does not indicate that auto-enrollment or auto-recertification will only occur when LIHEAP data sharing information is available. In fact, the Proposed Amended USECP clearly states that if a customer has received LIHEAP on an active CAP account, they will continue to remain eligible for CAP without providing any additional income information. Proposed Amended USECP at 10.

Peoples’ proposal to automatically recertify CAP customers based solely on their receipt of a LIHEAP grant within the past two years effectively establishes a process where LIHEAP recipients may remain in CAP indefinitely without re-verifying

household income, regardless of whether the customer agrees to participate in the DHS LIHEAP data sharing. As outlined in the April 2025 Order, the Commission addressed auto-recertification based on receipt of a LIHEAP grant in its November 2019 Order amending the CAP Policy Statement, where it explicitly found that the mere receipt of a LIHEAP grant is insufficient documentation of household income for CAP recertification purposes. April 2025 Order at 13, *citing the 2019 Amendments to Policy Statement on Customer Assistance Program, 52 Pa. Code §§ 69.261-69.267 Final Policy Statement and Order*, Docket No. M-2019-3012599 (Order entered on November 5, 2019), at 68-69.

The Commission has already granted Peoples and other public utilities approval to auto-recertify customers who have consented to share their LIHEAP income and household data with the utility. LIHEAP Data Sharing Order at 2-3. However, Peoples' auto-recertification proposal is not contingent on receipt of DHS LIHEAP data, as suggested by CAUSE-PA.

Therefore, while CAUSE-PA has reframed Peoples' request as a modernization of the CAP recertification process, we maintain that the Peoples Petition, as filed, sought approval for a policy that conflicts with previously established standards for CAP recertification. As such, CAUSE-PA's request for reconsideration on this issue is denied.

#### *4. Hardship Fund grants in lieu of LIHEAP auto-enrollment*

CAUSE-PA raises concerns with the Commission's recommendation that households should first be directed to apply for the Hardship Funds before being auto-enrolled in CAP. CAUSE-PA asserts that this approach contradicts the terms of Peoples' Commission-approved Hardship Fund policy, which states that funds are only available after the customer applies to all other assistance programs. Furthermore, CAUSE-PA submits that requiring high-balance, CAP-eligible customers to pursue

Hardship Funds would divert resources intended for customers who fall outside of CAP eligibility, thereby undermining the overall effectiveness and equity of universal service programs. CAUSE-PA Petition at 18.

CAUSE-PA further asserts that the Commission's mischaracterization of Peoples' proposal and failure to recognize the consequences of its policy recommendations warrant reconsideration. CAUSE-PA urges the Commission to direct Peoples to file a revised Petition within 90 days, in collaboration with stakeholders. CAUSE-PA Petition at 18-19.

*Resolution:*

We acknowledge CAUSE-PA's interpretation of Peoples' Hardship Fund policy and clarify that the Peoples Petition was not denied based on this issue. Instead, the Commission raised the matter to underscore an important question: whether CAP is always the most appropriate and effective universal service program to address a high balance. If a customer is eligible for a Hardship Fund grant and their LIHEAP grant is insufficient to resolve their arrears, a Hardship Fund grant should be considered, when appropriate, in accordance with Peoples' approved USECP. However, this determination must be made on a case-by-case basis, with consideration of whether the customer will meaningfully benefit from CAP enrollment beyond one-time arrearage forgiveness to address a high balance that could be otherwise satisfied with a Hardship Fund grant.

Specifically, our concern was that the Peoples' proposal did not include any mechanism to assess whether a customer with a balance exceeding \$300 would see a continued benefit from participation in CAP. In some cases, such customers may qualify for CAP enrollment but their ongoing monthly payment may not be reduced, meaning that being enrolled in the program doesn't make their energy bill more affordable. In those instances, a Hardship Fund grant may be a better fit for the customer's situation. The Commission raised this issue in the April 2025 Order to highlight the gap in Peoples'

proposal, not as grounds for denial of its Petition. However, we do note the need for further analysis and clarification on how Peoples might address this issue when implementing an auto-enrollment process for CAP. Accordingly, we grant CAUSE-PA's request for reconsideration on this issue and direct Peoples to consult with interested stakeholders and submit an amended Petition within 90 days of the entry date of this Order that addresses this issue in addition to the Commission's concerns raised in the April 2025 Order.

*5. Violation of due process in denying the uncontested Petition*

CAUSE-PA alleges that the Commission violated its due process obligations by denying Peoples' uncontested Petition without initiating a formal investigation, issuing questions, or providing an opportunity for public comment. CAUSE-PA emphasizes that this approach diverges from the Commission's well-established procedures for reviewing amendments to USECPs, where petitions are typically subject to supplemental data requests, stakeholder engagement, and a public comment period before final Commission action. CAUSE-PA Petition at 19-20.

According to CAUSE-PA, this procedural failure not only denied stakeholders a meaningful opportunity to be heard but also undermined the terms and intent of the Low-Income Stipulation. CAUSE-PA submits that the Stipulation explicitly required Peoples to file a Petition proposing modifications to improve CAP enrollment using DHS LIHEAP data as a means of offsetting the rate increase's impact on low-income customers. CAUSE-PA opines that, although the Joint Stipulation did not guarantee approval of Peoples' proposal, it did presume a good-faith review process. CAUSE-PA submits that the Commission's decision to deny the Peoples Petition effectively nullifies the Stipulation's intended relief. CAUSE-PA argues that this not only deprives low-income customers of timely access to necessary program improvements but also

evades the procedural fairness required under Pennsylvania administrative law. CAUSE-PA Petition at 20-21.

CAUSE-PA submits that the Commission's actions constitute a denial of procedural due process under both state precedent and Commission regulations. CAUSE-PA Petition at 21, *citing* 52 Pa. Code § 5.408 and *Popowsky v. Pa. PUC*, 805 A.2d 637 (Pa. Cmlwth. 2002). CAUSE-PA urges the Commission to reconsider its summary denial of the Peoples Petition, and instead reopen the matter for investigation, stakeholder consultation, and revised filings consistent with the Commission-approved Joint Stipulation and principles of fair administrative process. CAUSE-PA Petition at 20.

*Resolution:*

The Commission disagrees with CAUSE-PA's claim that the April 2025 Order violated its due process obligations and denies CAUSE-PA's request for reconsideration on this issue. Although we do not find that the determinations made in the April 2025 Order departed from due process requirements or standard regulatory procedures, we are providing stakeholders an opportunity to participate in the reconsideration of this matter by requiring Peoples to consult with interested stakeholders before submitting an amended Petition within 90 days of the entry date of this Order.

## **CONCLUSION**

For the reasons set forth above, the Petition for Reconsideration and/or Clarification filed by CAUSE-PA on May 9, 2025, is hereby granted in part and denied in part. Peoples is directed to consult with interested stakeholders on the issues addressed in this Order, as well as the April 2025 Order, and file an amended Petition to Amend its USECP which addresses the concerns raised in the Commission's April 2025 Order and aligns with its currently approved tariff, within 90 days of the entry date of this Order; **THEREFORE,**

**IT IS ORDERED:**

1. That the Petition for Reconsideration filed by the Coalition for Affordable Utility Service and Energy Efficiency in Pennsylvania on May 9, 2025, is granted in part and denied in part, consistent with this Order.

2. That Peoples Natural Gas Company LLC shall consult with interested stakeholders as directed in this Order and file an amended Petition to Amend its 2019-2024 Universal Service and Energy Conservation Plan that addresses the concerns raised by the Commission in its April 2025 Order and aligns with its current tariff, within 90 days of the entry date of this Order.

3. That the contact person for this Order is Norma Bowman, Bureau of Consumer Services, 717-705-0621.

**BY THE COMMISSION,**



Matthew L. Homsher  
Secretary

(SEAL)

ORDER ADOPTED: October 9, 2025

ORDER ENTERED: October 9, 2025