

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

Public Meeting held March 26, 2026

Commissioners Present:

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

Peoples Natural Gas Company LLC
Universal Service and Energy Conservation Plan M-2018-3003177
for 2019-2024

Peoples Gas Company LLC
Universal Service and Energy Conservation Plan M-2020-3021343
for 2019-2024

Petition of Peoples Natural Gas Company LLC to
Amend 2019-2024 Universal Service and Energy P-2024-3052324
Conservation Plan

ORDER

BY THE COMMISSION:

On January 7, 2026, Peoples Natural Gas Company (Peoples) filed an Amended Petition (Amended Petition) regarding its 2019-2024 Universal Service and Energy Conservation Plan (2019 USECP) and a redlined version of its 2019 USECP at Docket Nos. M-2018-3003177 and M-2020-3021343. The Amended Petition was also docketed at P-2024-3052324. By this Order, we identify issues that require further clarification by Peoples and invite stakeholder comment. Consistent with the schedule established

herein, Peoples is directed to provide supplemental information. Stakeholders are invited to comment on issues raised in this Order or any aspect of the Amended Petition.

BACKGROUND

Peoples' 2019 USECP was approved by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (Commission) Order entered on May 12, 2022 (May 2022 Order) at Docket Nos. M-2018-3003177 and M-2020-3021343. Peoples' 2019 USECP was last amended on November 26, 2024 and remains in effect until replaced.

Peoples 2024 Rate Case Proceeding (Docket No. R-2023-3044549)

On December 29, 2023, Peoples filed for a general rate increase at Docket No. R-2023-3044549. On May 30, 2024, a Joint Petition for Non-Unanimous Settlement (2024 Rate Case Settlement) was filed.¹ The 2024 Joint Petition incorporated the provisions of a Low-Income Stipulation² filed separately at the docket on May 30, 2024. On July 15, 2024, Administrative Law Judge Mary D. Long issued a Recommended Decision recommending approval of the 2024 Rate Case Settlement and approval of the Low-Income Stipulation. By Order entered on September 12, 2024, the Commission approved, *inter alia*, the 2024 Rate Case Settlement without modification. September 2024 Order at 103, OP #3.

As part of the universal service provisions in the Low-Income Stipulation, Peoples agreed, *inter alia*, to:

¹ Petitioners included 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.

² The parties to the Low-Income Stipulation included Peoples, CAUSE-PA, and the Pennsylvania Weatherization Providers Task Force.

- File a Petition at its current USECP docket within 90 days of a Final Order seeking authorization to amend its USECP to allow Peoples to initiate auto-enrollment of Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) recipients with significant balances into its Customer Assistance Program (CAP), permit auto-recertification, and waive income documentation requirements for CAP applicants that have received LIHEAP in the last two years. Low-Income Stipulation at 4, ¶6.
- Amend its tariff to state that “customers will automatically be enrolled in CAP if: a. the customer has a significant account balance (*i.e.*, exceeding \$300), and b. the customer has received a LIHEAP payment within the past two years.” Low-Income Stipulation at ¶15.

Peoples December 2024 Petition and Amended Petition (Docket Nos. M-2018-3003177 & M-2020-3021343)

On December 11, 2024, Peoples filed a Petition to Amend its USECP (Peoples December 2024 Petition) with clean and redlined versions of an amended 2019 USECP at Docket Nos. M-2018-3003177, M-2020-3021343, and P-2024-3052324. Peoples requested approval to auto-enroll customers in its CAP if they have an account balance exceeding \$300 and received a LIHEAP grant within the past two years, permit auto-recertification of LIHEAP recipients, and waive income documentation for LIHEAP recipients applying for CAP who received LIHEAP in the past two years. Peoples December 2024 Petition at 3.

The Coalition for Affordable Utility Services and Energy Efficiency in Pennsylvania (CAUSE-PA) and the Office of Consumer Advocate (OCA) filed separate letters on December 20 (December 20 CAUSE-PA Letter) and December 24 (December 24 OCA Letter), noting their support for approval of the Peoples December 2024 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 (April 2025 Order) denying the Peoples December 2024 Petition. Specifically, the Commission denied Peoples' proposal to auto-enroll or auto-recertify customers in its CAP, citing the use of possibly outdated, unverified income data and verbal customer attestations. The proposal also failed to address how the CAP auto-enrollment process would handle customers under contract with independent natural gas suppliers. April 2025 Order at 24.

Further, the Commission deemed the Peoples December 2024 Petition incomplete, citing Peoples failure to:

- Explore if Hardship Funds could address high customer balances prior to auto-enrollment in CAP;
- Fully explain the CAP auto-enrollment education process for customers or how it will address potential negative impacts;
- Provide estimates on how the proposal will impact annual CAP spending and enrollment numbers; and
- Establish a mechanism for tracking and reporting to evaluate the impact of the auto-enrollment process.

April 2025 Order at 24.

On May 9, 2025, CAUSE-PA filed a Petition (CAUSE-PA Petition) requesting reconsideration and/or clarification of the April 2025 Order. It requested that the Commission direct Peoples to confer with interested parties and submit an Amended Petition within 90 days. CAUSE-PA Petition at 1. On May 9, 2025, OCA filed a letter (May 9 OCA Letter) supporting the CAUSE-PA Petition. May 9 OCA Letter at 1.

On October 9, 2025, the Commission entered an Order on Reconsideration (October 2025 Order) granting CAUSE-PA's Petition, in part. The October 2025 Order directed Peoples to consult with its stakeholders and file an Amended Petition within 90 days that both aligns the 2019 USECP with its current tariff and addresses the Commission's concerns raised in the April 2025 Order. October 2025 Order at 17.

Peoples filed its Amended Petition on January 7, 2026. The Amended Petition requests approval to permit auto-enrollment for LIHEAP recipients into its CAP. LIHEAP recipients eligible for auto-enrollment must 1.) have significant balances; 2.) agree to share their current program year income data; and 3.) permit auto-recertification using the shared income information. Amended Petition at ¶14. Further, the Amended Petition included clean and redlined versions of a revised 2019 USECP with these proposals included.³

Peoples reports that it consulted with interested stakeholders as directed by the Commission's October 2025 Order prior to filing the Amended Petition. It discussed the issues at its fall Universal Services Advisory Group (USAG) meeting as well and convened a USAG subcommittee to deliberate the Petition in more detail. Amended Petition at ¶23.

On January 27, 2026, CAUSE-PA filed an Answer (CAUSE-PA Answer) supporting approval of the Amended Petition. CAUSE-PA states that Peoples' proposal aims to utilize existing LIHEAP data to streamline enrollment for customers who have consented to data sharing, improving payment consistency, and reducing uncollectible expenses. CAUSE-PA urges the Commission to swiftly approve the Amended Petition. CAUSE-PA Answer at 3-4, 10.

³ All references to the Revised 2019 USECP refer to the redlined version.

On January 29, 2026, OCA filed a Letter in Lieu of Answer (January 2026 OCA Letter) in support for the Amended Petition. OCA notes that the Amended Petition addresses the concerns raised by the Commission's Orders and that auto-enrollment of LIHEAP recipients will provide a streamlined enrollment process into CAP that should be approved. January 2026 OCA Letter at 1-2.

DISCUSSION

Peoples organized its Amended Petition based on the questions and concerns raised in the April 2025 and October 2025 Orders. We shall discuss and address each of Peoples' proposed USECP changes separately below as they are categorized in the Amended Petition.

1. Up-to-Date Income Data

The Peoples December 2024 Petition requested approval to auto-enroll CAP accounts with balances over \$300 that received LIHEAP benefits in the previous two years. Peoples proposed to auto-enroll eligible accounts through the usage of an existing weekly report as well as finding residential customers eligible for auto-enrollment through querying its system to identify customers with current balances of \$300 or more who are not currently enrolled in CAP but have received LIHEAP in the past two years. Peoples December 2024 Petition at 5.

In the April 2025 Order, the Commission rejected Peoples' proposal to auto-enroll customers in CAP with high balances if they received a LIHEAP grant anytime within the past two years based on concerns about the verification date of household income used to approve LIHEAP grants. Specifically, the Commission noted that the Department of Human Services (DHS) may use household income last verified more than two years earlier when approving LIHEAP grants. The Commission deemed this time frame

unacceptable due to it exceeding the CAP eligibility income time frames previously approved for LIHEAP data sharing.⁴ April 2025 Order at 12, October 2025 Order at 9-10.

In its Amended Petition, Peoples seeks approval to auto-enroll accounts with balances exceeding \$300 that have received LIHEAP, provided that the households have explicitly given permission to share their current year income data with Peoples via LIHEAP data sharing. It plans to auto-enroll these eligible accounts as identified during its regular weekly report review. Peoples will then examine the accounts received through the data-sharing process to see if CAP auto-enrollment would be beneficial for these customers. Amended Petition at ¶14; Revised 2019 USECP at 6-7.

Stakeholder Comments

CAUSE-PA disputes the Commission's concern that Peoples' proposal for automating CAP enrollment relies on potentially outdated or unverified income data. It avers that the Commission's claim that income data used for LIHEAP eligibility, and potentially for CAP enrollment, could be up to two years old is unsupported. It states that the LIHEAP State Plan outlines that applicants must provide documented proof of income to determine eligibility as well as show the household's gross income either from the 12 months before applying or the month before applying. CAUSE-PA Answer at 6-7, *citing* Pa. DHS LIHEAP State Plan, 55 Pa. Code § 601.83.

Resolution: The Amended Petition addresses the previous concerns raised by the Commission about outdated income information given that Peoples has proposed to use

⁴ The Commission's June 13, 2024 *2023 Review of All Jurisdictional Fixed Utilities' Universal Service Programs* (LIHEAP Data Sharing Order) at Docket No. M-2023-3038944 addressed the maximum time frame that LIHEAP income data could be used for universal service enrollments and ultimately permitted 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.

current year income data via LIHEAP data sharing for auto-enrollment. We find this proposed change consistent with the Commission’s directive to use income data for LIHEAP customers that have been verified by DHS within the past 12 months or the current or prior LIHEAP season. Accordingly, we have no further questions or objections to this aspect of Peoples’ CAP auto-enrollment proposal.

2. Account with Natural Gas Suppliers

In the April 2025 Order, the Commission noted that the CAP auto-enrollment proposal in Peoples December 2024 Petition did not explain how it would address situations when customers eligible for auto-enrollment have an existing contract with a natural gas supplier. April 2025 Order at 14-15.

In its Amended Petition, Peoples states that it will not auto-enroll eligible customers into CAP if they have an alternative natural gas supplier. Peoples proposes to send a letter to these households informing them that they are eligible for CAP but cannot be enrolled unless they return to default service.

Peoples attached a draft of its proposed letter as Exhibit A and states that it intends to continue stakeholder collaboration to refine these communications. Amended Petition at ¶15; Exhibit A at 13.

Stakeholder Comments

CAUSE-PA states it is collaborating with Peoples and its stakeholders to improve outreach to low-income customers who utilize competitive energy suppliers to facilitate timely enrollment in CAP. It highlights that these customers face higher costs and debt but encounter regulatory hurdles in accessing CAP and urges the Commission to enact

changes for easier enrollment and faster switching for gas accounts to default service. CAUSE-PA Answer at 8-9.

Resolution: Peoples' clarification addresses the Commission's concerns regarding this issue. We support Peoples' proposal to defer auto-enrollment of eligible customers into CAP if they have an existing contract with a natural gas supplier and instead send them a letter notifying them of their CAP eligibility if they return to default service. We also support Peoples' proposal to continue collaborating with stakeholders to further improve these communications. Accordingly, we have no further questions or objections to this aspect of Peoples' CAP auto-enrollment proposal.

3. *Determining CAP Payment Amounts*

In the April 2025 Order, the Commission found Peoples' proposal to use verbal self-attestation of income to determine the CAP payment amount for auto-enrolled customers unacceptable. The Commission noted its previous rejection of proposals to use self-attestation of income for determining eligibility and benefit levels in CAPs for National Fuel Gas and Aqua Pennsylvania.⁵ The Commission found the use of unverified income for CAP auto-enrollment inappropriate as LIHEAP applicants can now share verified income and household data with utilities if they choose. April 2025 Order at 14-15.

In its Amended Petition, Peoples proposes the use of verified and current household income information provided through LIHEAP data sharing to determine the amount of a CAP payment for auto-enrolled accounts. Peoples states the verified income data will allow for accurate calculation of the CAP monthly payment amount for

⁵ See *National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation 2017-2019 USECP Order*, Docket No. M-2016-2573847 (Order entered March 1, 2018), at 36-37 and *PA PUC v. Aqua Pennsylvania, Inc. Opinion and Order*, Docket No. R-2021-3027385 *et al.* (Order entered on May 16, 2022), at 339-341.

auto-enrolled or auto-recertified customers, based on a percentage of income (PIP) or actual budget amount, whichever is lower. Amended Petition at ¶16; Revised 2019 USECP at 7.

Resolution: Peoples' amended proposal addresses the Commission's concerns about using unverified income to establish CAP payment amounts for auto-enrolled customers. We support the use of household information provided through LIHEAP data sharing to ensure customers enrolled or recertified for CAP will receive CAP payments based on their current household income and size. Accordingly, we have no further questions or objections to this aspect of Peoples' CAP auto-enrollment proposal.

4. Arrearage Threshold of \$300

Peoples reports it consulted with its USAG and determined that a \$300 arrearage threshold is appropriate for automatically enrolling customers into its CAP. Peoples states the \$300 balance indicates a customer likely had at least \$500 in total arrears after receiving a minimum \$200 LIHEAP cash grant and that such a balance signifies payment trouble, warranting CAP enrollment over using the Hardship Fund to reduce debt. Amended Petition at ¶17.

Resolution: As noted in the April 2025 Order, the Commission finds merit in using an arrearage threshold as part of CAP auto-enrollment criteria to ensure the customer will benefit from the program. April 2025 Order at 16. Accordingly, we have no questions or objections to this aspect of Peoples' CAP auto-enrollment proposal.

5. Hardship Fund

The April 2025 Order found Peoples' CAP auto-enrollment proposal inadequate as it did not take into consideration whether LIHEAP recipients with balances exceeding

\$300 may be eligible for a Hardship Fund grant, if available, before auto-enrollment into CAP. April 2025 Order at 16-18.

Peoples states that it consulted with its USAG on the option of using the Hardship Fund in lieu of CAP enrollment to address high balances. Peoples concludes that auto-enrolling eligible households into CAP is more effective and fiscally responsible than using the Hardship Fund to pay off arrearages. It notes that the Hardship Fund is a fund of last resort and typically expected to fill in the gap for customers whose income exceeds LIHEAP's eligibility requirements. Peoples states that CAP enrollment allows customers to defer their balance for arrearage forgiveness while retaining Hardship Grant eligibility for future use within the program year, whereas initially using the Hardship Grant would prevent access to another grant until the following program year. Amended Petition at ¶18.

Additionally, Peoples asserts that utilizing Hardship Funding rather than CAP auto-enrollment would reduce the limited funds for hardships by \$150,000 to \$250,000 for every 500 households (*i.e.*, 500 households multiplied by a maximum Hardship Fund grant of up to \$500) that receive the Hardship Grant. Amended Petition at ¶18.

Stakeholder Comments

CAUSE-PA identifies numerous concerns regarding the use of the Hardship Fund before or instead of CAP enrollment for low-income customers. Concerns include the fund's requirement to exhaust other energy resources first, its limited funding which ran out by July in the most recent program year, and restrictive eligibility rules during winter months. It avers that utilizing limited, restricted Hardship Funds as a primary method to address arrearages for low-income households is impractical and differs considerably from current universal service policies that use limited Hardship Funds for critical hardships not solvable through CAP. CAUSE-PA Answer at 9.

Resolution: We find the provided explanation acceptable as it addresses the potential impact of Peoples' Hardship Fund on its CAP annual enrollments and spending, as well as takes into account the Hardship Fund's limited budget and its role as a fund of last resort. Accordingly, we have no further questions or objections to this aspect of Peoples' CAP auto-enrollment proposal.

6. Customer Education

In the April 2025 Order, the Commission found Peoples' proposal lacking as it did not contain a detailed description of how it proposes to educate auto-enrolled customers on CAP's benefits, responsibilities, restrictions, and how they can opt-out of CAP. April 2025 Order at 19-20.

In its Amended Petition, Peoples explains that it is modifying its CAP enrollment communications for both auto-enrolled and applicant customers. All CAP enrollees will receive a Welcome letter explaining their CAP participation and instructions for opting out. Auto-enrolled customers receive a Welcome letter explaining CAP benefits, their adjusted bill amount, and instructions for opting out, with a second page serving as the CAP agreement detailing responsibilities and restrictions. Peoples plans to continue collaborating with stakeholders on these communication materials if the Amended Petition is approved. Amended Petition at ¶19; Exhibit B at 15-16.

Resolution: We find Peoples' proposed letter a good first step in educating auto-enrolled CAP customers about the benefits of the program as well as its responsibilities and restrictions. The letter also instructs auto-enrolled customers to contact Peoples if they do not wish to participate in CAP. However, the letter does not explain the time frame for opting out of CAP without penalty (*i.e.*, 12-month stay-out). Peoples explains in its Amended Petition that it will waive the 12-month stay-out provision for auto-enrolled

customers who opt-out of CAP within 90 days. Amended Petition at ¶22. This time frame and restriction should be specified in the letter. Otherwise, we find Peoples' proposed letter consistent with the Commission's recommendations in the April 2025 Order. Additionally, we support Peoples' proposal to work with its stakeholders to further improve these communications to educate auto-enrolled consumers on program benefits, requirements, and restrictions.

7. Implementing, Tracking, and Evaluating Auto-Enrollment

In the April 2025 Order, the Commission found Peoples' proposal incomplete as it did not include any new tracking and reporting to evaluate the impact of CAP auto-enrollment on low-income customers. The April 2025 Order recommended, at a minimum, establishing tracking and reporting on (1) the number of auto-enrolled customers broken down by the federal poverty income guidelines (FPIG) level; (2) the number of customers that opt-out; and (3) the impact of auto-enrollment on payment behavior and debt forgiveness. April 2025 Order at 23.

Peoples reports that its customer information system is currently unable to distinguish between voluntary and auto-enrolled CAP customers but acknowledges the value of tracking this data for evaluating program effectiveness. Peoples proposes to manually track a pilot group to generate both an annual report as well as provide quarterly reports to its USAG. These reports will track three key metrics: the number of auto-enrolled customers by FPIG, opt-out rates, and the impact on payment behavior and debt forgiveness. Amended Petition at ¶20.

Stakeholder Comments

CAUSE-PA recommends that Peoples also implement tracking for customer opt-out reasons and timing relative to the 90-day grace period proposed in its Amended Petition. CAUSE-PA Answer at 10.

Resolution: We have no objection to the CAP auto-enrollment metrics and reporting schedule proposed by Peoples. However, we are not persuaded to adopt Peoples' proposal to track and report on only a "pilot" group of auto-enrolled CAP customers. The Commission routinely requires public utilities to track and report on any new universal service program, pilot, or initiative that will have an impact on universal service enrollment, benefits, or costs. For example, when Peoples received approval to implement an Extended CAP (E-CAP) Pilot to serve customers with incomes between 151%-200% of the FPIG, the Commission required it to file and serve an annual report regarding E-CAP customer participation, costs, payment compliance, and balance impact. *See Peoples 2015-2018 USECP Final Order*, Docket No. M-2014-2432515 (Order entered on December 17, 2015), at 21-22.

Similarly, Peoples should provide the Commission, its USAG, and other stakeholders with a complete picture of how many customers are auto-enrolled into CAP, how many have opted out, and the impact of this new process on payment behavior, utility debt, and program costs. In addition, without tracking each auto-enrolled customer, it is not clear how Peoples would ensure each customer is given 90 days to opt-out of the program if it is not tracking which customers had been auto-enrolled.

Accordingly, we are not inclined to adopt this aspect of Peoples' CAP auto-enrollment proposal. When Peoples' CAP auto-enrollment process is implemented, the public utility shall be required to track and report on all customers auto-enrolled into CAP. It shall also be required to file its annual report on CAP auto-enrollments at its

current USECP docket. We also find merit in CAUSE-PA's recommendation that Peoples track the reasons auto-enrolled customers opt-out of CAP and the timing of the opt-out request relative to the 90-day window. In its response to this Order, Peoples is directed to comment on the feasibility of including these additional metrics as part of its annual and quarterly reporting on CAP auto-enrollments.

8. Impact on Current CAP Program

In the April 2025 Order, the Commission found the Peoples' Petition incomplete as it did not analyze the effect of the proposed CAP auto-enrollment on program enrollment levels, total spending, or costs recovered from ratepayers. The Commission stated that a CAP auto-enrollment proposal should also analyze the impact on universal service costs for non-CAP ratepayers and estimate savings from reduced collection activity and write-offs. April 2025 Order at 22-23.

Peoples reports that it typically receives 25,000 LIHEAP grants annually, with half of the recipients already enrolled in CAP and 4.7% of the non-CAP recipients with balances exceeding \$300. In the 2024-2025 LIHEAP program year data, Peoples had 25,319 LIHEAP recipients with 556 non-CAP LIHEAP recipients with balances exceeding \$300. Peoples estimates the impact of auto-enrolling the 556 LIHEAP customers into its CAP would be \$530,617 annually, resulting in a \$0.0104 increase in the per-unit universal service charge recovered from ratepayers. Amended Petition at ¶21.

Resolution: We have no questions or objections regarding Peoples' initial enrollment and spending estimates for auto-enrolling eligible households with balances exceeding \$300 into CAP. These cost impacts should continue to be tracked and reported as part of its annual reporting on CAP auto-enrollments. However, Peoples did not provide all projected data requested in the April 2025 Order. Specifically, Peoples did not provide the estimates of savings which may be achieved through anticipated reductions in costs

related to collection activity and gross residential write-offs. Accordingly, we direct Peoples to provide these estimates in its response to this Order.

9. Any Potential Negative Impact of Auto-Enrollment

In the April 2025 Order, the Commission averred that Peoples did not discuss any policies or procedures enacted to protect auto-enrolled customers from negative effects if/when they leave CAP before or after an opt-out period. April 2025 Order at 21.

The Commission stated a proposed opt-out policy should explain whether (1) any CAP credits received or pre-program arrearages (PPA) forgiven would need to be returned; (2) any CAP arrears accrued during the auto-enrollment period will be eligible for a payment arrangement; (3) further arrearage forgiveness will be offered if the customer enrolls in CAP at a later date; and (4) what steps will be taken to guarantee these customers will not be auto-enrolled again. April 2025 Order at 21.

Peoples notes that the 2019 USECP prohibits CAP re-enrollment for 12 months when a customer removes themselves from CAP. Peoples proposes to waive the re-enrollment provision for auto-enrolled customers that opt-out of CAP within 90 days. If these customers decide to re-enroll in CAP later, their CAP credits and arrearage forgiveness at that future date will be preserved. Amended Petition at ¶22.

Stakeholder Comments

CAUSE-PA recommends that Peoples flag accounts that have opted out of CAP to prevent their automatic re-enrollment in future LIHEAP seasons. CAUSE-PA Answer at 10.

Resolution: Peoples’ proposal addresses the Commission’s questions in the April 2025 Order about whether an auto-enrolled customer who opts out of CAP will have to return any benefits received and whether they will be eligible to receive arrearage forgiveness again at a future date. However, Peoples did not explain whether arrears accrued in CAP prior to opting out of the program will be eligible for a utility payment arrangement. Peoples also did not explain what steps it would take to guarantee these customers will not be auto-enrolled in CAP again. We find merit in CAUSE-PA’s suggestion that Peoples could mark those customer accounts that opted out of CAP in their systems to prevent auto-reenrollment in the future. Accordingly, Peoples should provide an answer to these questions in its response to this Order.

CONCLUSION

Consistent with the discussions above, we shall defer approval of Peoples’ amended CAP auto-enrollment proposal until we have received additional clarifications from the utility. Specifically, we request Peoples’ clarification on the following issues.

- Specify how it will amend its proposed Welcome Letter for auto-enrolled customers to reflect that they may opt-out of CAP within 90 days and have the ability to enroll again without penalty (*i.e.*, 12-month stay-out provision).
- The feasibility of adopting CAUSE-PA’s recommendation that Peoples track the reasons auto-enrolled customers opt-out of CAP and the timing of the opt-out request relative to the 90-day window.
- Provide estimates of anticipated reductions in costs related to collection activity and gross residential write-offs through the adoption of CAP auto-enrollments.
- Explain whether arrears accrued in CAP prior to opting out of the program will be eligible for a utility payment arrangement and what steps Peoples

will take to guarantee these customers will not be auto-enrolled in CAP again.

For the reasons set forth above, Peoples' Amended Petition to Amend its 2019 USECP filed on January 7, 2026, is withheld pending review of requested information and stakeholder comments, as set forth in this Order. Comments are due 20 days after Peoples' response and filing deadline, and reply comments are due 15 days thereafter; **THEREFORE,**

IT IS ORDERED:

1. That the Petition by Peoples Natural Gas LLC to amend its 2019-2024 Universal Service and Energy Conservation Plan filed on January 7, 2026, at Docket Nos. M-2018-3003177, M-2020-3021343, and P-2024-3052324, is withheld pending review of requested information and stakeholder comments and reply comments, as set forth in this Order.

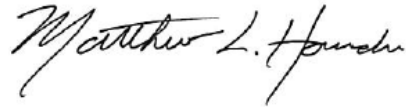
2. That a copy of this Order be served on all parties to Docket Nos. M-2018-3003177, M-2020-3021343, P-2024-3052324, R-2023-3044549, R-2024-3046932, and R-2024-3047068.

3. That Peoples Natural Gas LLC shall file and serve the supplemental information required herein within 20 days of the entry date of this Order.

4. That comments to this Order shall be filed within 20 days after the filing deadline for the supplemental information. Reply comments shall be filed within 15 days thereafter.

5. That the contact person for this Order is Jennifer Johnson, Bureau of Consumer Services, jennifjohn@pa.gov.

BY THE COMMISSION,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew L. Homsher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Matthew L. Homsher
Secretary

(SEAL)

ORDER ADOPTED: March 26, 2026

ORDER ENTERED: March 26, 2026