

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI**

In the Matter of Union Electric Company )	
d/b/a AmerenUE for Authority to File )	
Tariffs Increasing Rates for Electric )	Case No. ER-2007-0002
Service Provided to Customers in the )	
Company's Missouri Service Area. )	

In the Matter of Union Electric Company )	
d/b/a AmerenUE for Authority to File )	
Tariffs Increasing Rates for Natural Gas )	Case No. GR-2007-0003
Service Provided to Customers in the )	
Company's Missouri Service Area. )	

**DISSENTING OPINION OF COMMISSIONER CONNIE MURRAY**

The Commission voted to hold fifteen (15) local public hearings to allow the consumers to voice their opposition or support for rate increases proposed by Union Electric Company, d/b/a AmerenUE in the above-captioned cases.<sup>1</sup> I am dissenting from this Order because I believe that this inordinately large number of local public hearings is unnecessary and wasteful of time and public resources.

I clearly believe that this Commission has a duty to allow for local public hearings during the pendency of rate cases, as information gathered at these hearings is invaluable to the Commission. Never before, however, has the Commission required an investor-owned utility to incur the expense of preparing, noticing and attending fifteen local public hearings in one combined rate case. Indeed, in several recent large company rate cases, this Commission has held no more than four local public hearings. These rate cases include Kansas City Power & Light's current rate case (only two hearings); Missouri Gas Energy's 2004 rate case

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the Office of Public Counsel "only" requested twelve local public hearings originally but this number has somehow expanded to include three additional hearings.


(four hearings) and Aquila's 2005 combined electric and steam rate cases for both its Missouri Public Service and St. Joseph Power & Light divisions (two hearings). While more local public hearings may be warranted because of AmerenUE's large service territory and the fact that these hearings address the combined electric and gas rate cases, fifteen hearings are unnecessary.

The time, money and effort that go into providing local public hearings should be considered by the Commission. The need for such hearings can be addressed without overburdening the Commission's staff and the utility. Recently, following severe storm outages in AmerenUE's service territory, the Commission managed to provide ample opportunity for public input by holding five lengthy local public hearings in Eastern Missouri. A similar number of hearings would suffice in this instance. These hearings have necessarily been scheduled during one of the busiest periods of the rate case. Staff, the Office of Public Counsel and AmerenUE representatives will most certainly be working long hours in January in order to be prepared for settlement conferences and evidentiary hearing dates. The fifteen local public hearings will most certainly place an undue burden on all of the parties and interveners, and while the Office of Public Counsel may have the resources and the will to bear this burden, the Commission should have limited the local public hearings to a reasonable number.

Given the foregoing, I must dissent from the majority's Order. The Commission should have taken into account matters of administrative efficiency and fairness to the public, and provided for a sufficient number of local public hearings

that would not have overburdened the Commission's resources and the parties in this case. There is no logical reason for the majority's decision.

**Respectfully submitted,**

  
Connie Murray, Commissioner

Dated at Jefferson City, Missouri  
on this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of November, 2006.