

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
STATE OF MISSOURI

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
LOCAL PUBLIC HEARING

In the Matter of Spire)
Missouri Inc. d/b/a Spire's)
Request for Authority)
to Implement a General Rate)
Increase for Natural) File No. GR-2025-0107
Gas Service Provided in the)
the Company's Missouri)
Service Areas)

June 02, 2025
12:00 p.m.

University of St. Louis
Millennium Student Center Room A
17 Arnold Grobman Drive
St. Louis, MO 63121

VOLUME I

RILEY FEWELL,
REGULATORY LAW JUDGE

KAYLA HAHN, CHAIR
MAIDA J. COLEMAN,
GLEN KOLKMEYER,
JOHN MITCHELL
COMMISSIONERS

Reported by:
Colin Wallis, Lexitas Legal, St. Louis, MO 63101

* * * * *

(Starting time of the hearing: 1:15 p.m.)

REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: We can go on the record. Good afternoon. It is June 2nd, 2025, and the current time is around 1:15 p.m.

The Missouri Public Service Commission has set this time for a local public hearing to give members of the public a chance to comment about the application in file number GR-2025-0107, which is captioned as In the Matter of Spire Missouri, Inc. doing business as Spire's Request for Authority to Implement a General Rate Increase for Natural Gas Service In The Company's Missouri Service Areas.

The Missouri Public Service Commission regulates investor-owned companies in Missouri and ensures that rates are just and reasonable. The Commission also regulates the quality of safety and safety of the operations of investor-owned utilities. The Commission is made up of five commissioners, however there are currently only four. Chair Kayla Hahn and Commissioners Maida Coleman, Glenn Kolkmeier and John Mitchell. The commissioners are appointed by the governor to fixed terms and

1 confirmed by the Senate. They employ a staff
2 of engineers, accountants, attorneys, financial
3 analysts and other specialists in the field of
4 utility regulation. With me today are
5 Commissioner Coleman in person, as well as
6 Chair Hahn and Commissioner Mitchell online.

7 Commissioners, if you have any questions
8 at any time, feel free to interrupt me and ask
9 them. My name is Riley Fewell and I'm the
10 regulatory law judge presiding over this
11 hearing. This is an official hearing for the
12 Missouri Public Service Commission, and the
13 statements and testimony of witnesses will be
14 recorded by the court reporter and must be
15 given under oath or affirmation. The
16 Commission has not made any decisions in this
17 case and neither the commissioners nor myself
18 can answer any questions about the issues of
19 the case today because the Commission must
20 remain impartial until all evidence is
21 presented. As we want to provide all attendees
22 an adequate opportunity to speak this
23 afternoon, we'll limit the time of testimony to
24 only three minutes.

25 If you, or someone you know, would like to

1 make additional comments, there is a comments
2 tab you can reach via the Commission's website
3 at psc.mo.gov; on the right side of the
4 homepage, there's a link titled Submit
5 Comments. You will click on that link to
6 submit your comments, making sure that you
7 reference this case number: GR-2025-0107.
8 There will also be another local public hearing
9 tonight at the Shrewsbury City Center at
10 6:00 p.m., as well as two tomorrow at noon and
11 6:00 p.m. both of which are virtual. And there
12 will be three other local public hearings. Two
13 on Wednesday in Kansas City at noon and St.
14 Joe -- St. Joseph's at 6:00 p.m. and one in
15 Joplin at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday.

16 If you or anyone you know would like to
17 attend any of those other local public
18 hearings, please let staff or OPC know before
19 you leave here today to get further details.
20 The court reporter is transcribing this
21 hearing, so the Commission may review and read
22 the comments. Commissioner Coleman, would you
23 like to make any opening remarks?

24 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Thank you. Thank
25 you, Judge. Good afternoon, everyone. Thank

1 you so much for attending this afternoon's
2 local public hearing. I come to you on behalf
3 of the commissioners here in person, but as you
4 heard noted by the judge, there -- our
5 commissioners are online; and, so, on behalf of
6 Chairwoman Kayla Hahn, we appreciate the fact
7 that you have taken the time to come today to
8 provide us with information about not only the
9 service that's provided by Spire that you
10 receive, but also your public testimony that
11 gives us insight so we can make the best
12 decision possible.

13 Although the other commissioners are not
14 here in person, not only are they listening in,
15 but they will also, just as I, be able to
16 review the testimony that's received today. It
17 is recorded; we are able to review that as
18 often we need to. Your comments are part of
19 the official record, so we would be able to go
20 back and evaluate everything that's been said.
21 So, again, we thank you for being here today
22 and look forward to your testimony. Thank you
23 very much. Thank you, Judge.

24 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you,
25 commissioner. If the parties can enter --

1 enter appearances beginning with Spire.

2 MR. ARIAS: Thank you, your Honor. Good
3 morning. Anthony Arias on behalf of Spire.
4 Also good morning to Commissioner Coleman,
5 chair and the other commissioners online. With
6 me at this table is Scott Weitzel and Vernita
7 Rodgers.

8 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you.
9 And the commissioner staff.

10 MS. KERR: Carolyn Kerr on behalf on
11 staff.

12 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: The Office
13 of Public Counsel.

14 MR. CLIZER: John Clizer, the Office of
15 Public Counsel.

16 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Are there
17 any intervenors present who would like to enter
18 their appearance? Okay. For those who would
19 like to provide comments today, I'm going to
20 call the names listed on the sign-up sheet in
21 the order they appear. When I call your name,
22 please come down to the podium. I will place
23 you under oath and ask you to state and spell
24 your name and then you can offer your comments
25 to the Commission. As I previously stated, we

1 are limiting comments to three minutes today so
2 everyone present has an adequate opportunity to
3 be heard. Also, please remain at the podium
4 after your remarks until you've been excused
5 because the Commission may have some questions
6 for you. If the attorneys have any questions,
7 they can let me know at that time as well.
8 Would Mahala Pruett-Pittman. I apologize if I
9 pronounce anyone's name' wrong.

10 (Mahala Pruett-Pittman sworn.)

11 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: You may go
12 ahead.

13 MS. PRUETT-PITTMAN: Hi, my name is Mahala
14 Pruett-Pittman. Did you need me to spell it?

15 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Uh, for the
16 court reporter, yes, please.

17 MS. PRUETT-PITTMAN: That's M-a-h-a-l-a,
18 Pruett, P-r-u-e-t-t, dash, Pittman,
19 P-i-t-t-m-a-n, and I am the Sierra Club
20 Missouri Chapter organizer, but I am here as a
21 concerned community member and individual. I'm
22 grateful for the opportunity to speak at
23 today's public hearing. Being a local
24 organizer, I have spoken to energy-burdened
25 communities. I've gone door-to-door in the

1 canvassing campaigns, and I'm hearing from
2 struggling families and from redline parts of
3 our city and the throughline is very clear, the
4 bills are far too high. When St. Louis
5 families are dogpiled with increasing utility
6 prices in addition to the rising prices of
7 groceries and other necessities they're forced
8 to make difficult decisions: taking medications
9 every other day; forced to work extra shifts;
10 abandoning HVAC systems in heat waves;
11 unplugging major appliances such as
12 refrigerators and hoping that their family's
13 food is not compromised overnight; directly
14 related to heat and gas; leaving the oven open
15 and on to heat their home or resorting to space
16 heaters or portable heaters, which we know are
17 fire hazards.

18 Raising gas rates will only increase the
19 dangerous lengths St. Louis families have to
20 resort to in order to heat their homes, take
21 hot showers, and prepare hot meals. Low income
22 families in St. Louis are already struggling to
23 making ends meet on top of recovering from a
24 natural disaster that left families having lost
25 many of their belonging and are now without

1 homes.

2 This rate increase could add up to \$186
3 per year or \$14 per month on gas bills. And in
4 case \$14 a month does not seem like a lot,
5 let's break down how that could go. So \$14
6 could cover a loaf of bread, a gallon of milk,
7 a dozen eggs, butter and a box of cereal, some
8 of the foundation items on a family's grocery
9 list. \$14 is 14 rides on the Metro bus, which
10 is at least a week's worth of work commutes to
11 work and home. It could be five rides on
12 trains. It could be two day passes for the
13 Metro bus. Even more than that for a reduced
14 fair. \$14 could be lunch money for school age
15 children. It could be toiletries, hygiene
16 supplies, school supplies, gas money.

17 \$14 could go towards the copay on a
18 monthly refill of a much needed medication.
19 Considering what our communities are and have
20 been going through, tornado recovery, the
21 Ameren rate hike, rising grocery prices, more
22 and more continues to take from communities,
23 making it harder and harder just to survive.
24 And then you consider that Spire increased
25 profits last year, and you tell me who really

1 needs the \$14 in their pocket? The utility or
2 the community? Thank you.

3 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Charmell
4 Johnson?

5 MS. JOHNSON: Who can follow that?

6 (Charmel Johnson sworn.)

7 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you.
8 Can you please state and spell your name for
9 the court reporter?

10 MS. JOHNSON: Charmel Johnson,
11 C-h-a-r-m-e-l, J-o-h-n-s-o-n.

12 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you.
13 You may proceed.

14 MS. JOHNSON: Mahala pretty much covered
15 it. As a senior citizen, I'm 74, and I'm still
16 working because I don't want to have to rely on
17 anybody. I don't want to go begging anywhere.
18 I just want to be autonomous, and it's getting
19 harder and harder to be that way. I think it
20 was last summer, I went to -- well, the summer
21 before, I think, I'm not sure; but I went to
22 CAASTLC here in St. Louis; I think it's in
23 Overland on Woodson Road to seek some aid for
24 energy assistance. It was the worse experience
25 ever because CAASTLC was still closed down for

1 Covid. They had signs that you couldn't enter
2 the building except to drop your application on
3 the table. There was a hostile security guard.
4 I put it over there, you know, it's -- not
5 that -- I don't like asking for these programs;
6 energy assistance. I do not. It's
7 humiliating, but I had to do it. And, so, I
8 wasn't sent a letter saying that there was
9 something I had overlooked to fill out, my
10 application was denied, and you have until this
11 date to get the information to us. And I think
12 it was the day after that letter was sent to
13 me, the day after the expiration date, so I
14 wasn't able to get energy assistance. I had to
15 do something worse. I had to ask my
16 grandchildren to help me, which they did and
17 got me through, so I had to go back to driving
18 a school bus when school started.

19 But I saw a Youtube a long time ago, and
20 it was called The Corporation. And it opened
21 my eyes to a lot of things such as external
22 expenses. They're called external expenses
23 that corporations pass on to their consumers or
24 to the government or whether they can get rid
25 of these expenses that technically they're

1 responsible for. I'm not kidding. If I let
2 my -- if something happened in my life and it
3 was a major event and I couldn't pay my car
4 insurance and I came to you, sir, and put, you
5 know, the new rate on your desk because it had
6 gone up. You would look at me like I'm crazy,
7 and that's pretty much the way I look at Spire
8 and Ameren when they come year after year and
9 they never denied these rates that they ask
10 for. Nobody has the will to say no, that
11 somehow make it make sense to the Public
12 Service Commission.

13 So, I ask that you all look at this more
14 fairly this time and realize the impact that
15 it's having on the poor, because the poor are
16 getting the same rates that the wealthy in --
17 the people in Ladue that have lived there on,
18 you know, are getting; and that's not fair.
19 Because when I went to CAASTLC, I had to prove
20 my need. I had to really prove it, and I'm
21 sure they went over everything with a fine
22 tooth comb. They didn't just come in and say,
23 I need this, you know. Well, Spire is saying
24 we need this. I don't know. They're hooking
25 meters up to people's houses that they didn't

1 ask for and other areas. The meters are so
2 big, so rusted out, like my apartment complex
3 for one. Come and take a look. It looks like
4 sometimes I'm nervous just sleeping, because I
5 don't know if those meters are going to blow.
6 I just don't know.

7 But I feel that you own a corporation and
8 you run that corporation, you should do so
9 responsibly where you're not asking the public,
10 oh, guys, you need to chip in and help us with
11 this. I have a hard time helping somebody
12 that's making 1.8 million dollars a year.

13 Oh, by the way, sir? You. I just got on
14 the internet, thank God for the internet, I
15 asked you where does your pipes come from,
16 where do you get your pipes from, and you said
17 I don't know, and I don't trust I don't know
18 answers. So, I went on the internet and found
19 out that most of the pipes, such as the kind
20 you use, are imported from China, Italy and
21 France. You may not be doing it, but, you
22 know, I don't see how you wouldn't because
23 other major companies are doing this. But I
24 don't want to be here a year from now trying to
25 say, I don't want a rate increase because of

1 the tariffs. So, I hope this gentlemen in the
2 middle, I hope you look that up and make sure
3 you are partnering -- partnering with United
4 States companies to get your pipes. That's all
5 I have for right now. Thank you.

6 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you.
7 Sheila Steed? Oh, sorry, Julia Allen.

8 (Julia Allen sworn.)

9 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Can you
10 please state and spell your name for the
11 record?

12 MS. ALLEN: Julia Allen, J-u-l-i-a,
13 A-l-l-e-n.

14 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: You may
15 proceed.

16 MS. ALLEN: First of all to the
17 commissioners, I feel like I'm -- I have a new
18 job, and that's to testify at these hearings.
19 Having said that, I also want to say, I want to
20 give -- recognize what the utility companies
21 have done with their customer -- especially,
22 with their customer service department. They
23 have a very good customer service department.
24 They do go out of their way to try and help
25 people when people do call in.

1 However, on the other side, and I'm not
2 trying to disrespect anybody or anybody's
3 organization or what organizations are doing
4 for other people, my complaint is the middle
5 class is being squeezed. The middle class in
6 this country is paying for everything, okay?
7 And this is just my personal viewpoint. The
8 way I look at it is the people who I would say
9 are in the upper 10 percent, they don't have to
10 worry about food, gas, lights and electrics.
11 People who meet the lower income guidelines, a
12 lot of the times you have these programs that
13 are going to take care of their bills. And
14 sometimes the programs are very generous.

15 However, people in the middle class, which
16 for some of the programs for people that
17 qualify in the State of Missouri, if you make
18 \$10 over that income level, you don't qualify
19 for anything. But the middle class, our tax
20 dollars, are paying for everything for
21 everybody. We're the ones that are being
22 squeezed to death. Nobody every talks about
23 how this affects the middle class. And I think
24 the middle class is the biggest tax paying
25 group in the United States. It has nothing to

1 do with age or anything. It's about your
2 income and where you fall in the income --
3 income group, and I think it's time that
4 utilities take into consideration at least
5 those people, say, who make \$100 more. I know
6 this isn't really about, in my mind, about
7 making a major policy change; but people who
8 make, say, because in Missouri because we have
9 such a low level for poverty, that it's really
10 ridiculous when you look at the other states.

11 I'm against the rate increase. I
12 understand that you have to have funds in order
13 to do business. However, at this time and
14 point, I just don't see you getting 15 percent,
15 almost a 16 percent rate increase. I
16 understand also that once all this is done and
17 it goes back to all -- testimonies go back to,
18 the Public Service Commission is going to make
19 a decision but it's not going to be a decision
20 to not give them a rate increase.

21 So I'm just saying, you know, take the
22 middle class people into consideration.
23 They're the ones that are also suffering. They
24 have bills to pay they -- you know, food,
25 medicine. Nobody ever talks about them.

1 It's -- and, like I say, I'm not trying to
2 disrespect anybody's organization or what
3 people are doing or people who have lower
4 incomes. The middle class needs to be thought
5 about, too. And, like I say, I'm completely
6 against the rate increase.

7 But I know in the end, that Spire, just
8 like Ameren. They're going to get some kind of
9 rate increase. So when you're thinking about
10 the percent, think about the people in the
11 middle who are actually really paying their tax
12 dollars to support programs at Ameren, to
13 support programs at Spire. Our tax money --
14 that's our tax money in my eyesight. The other
15 thing I want --

16 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Ma'am, if
17 you could complete your thought. Sorry, you're
18 at the --

19 MS. ALLEN: Okay.

20 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: -- three
21 minute mark.

22 MS. ALLEN: My other thought is this: in
23 my years, the only -- the only utility that's
24 actually really helped the middle class is the
25 Metropolitan Sewer District, and that's because

1 of their income limits. They're much higher,
2 so, thank you.

3 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you.
4 Sheila Steed?

5 MS. STEED: Good afternoon. That's fine,
6 okay.

7 (Sheila Steed sworn.)

8 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you.
9 Can you please state your name for the record?

10 MS. STEED: Sheila Steed, Sh-e-i-l-a,
11 S-t-e-e-d.

12 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you.
13 You may proceed.

14 MS. STEED: Okay. I just want to let you
15 guys know, I think Spire does a great job,
16 okay? I am 75 years old. I have, of course,
17 been with Spire ever since I've been an adult.
18 I have also used currently their budgeting
19 planning, which I have been on there for years.
20 That's great in helping, especially as a
21 senior, to be able to pay my bill, because the
22 worse thing in the world is to get a bill and
23 open it or get on the internet and see that
24 it's more than what I expected. So, that is
25 one great thing that I do have to commend them

1 for.

2 Now, in order for me to continue to live
3 and afford everything that's going on that's
4 going up, my cousin and I have decided to live
5 together in order to accomplish this. I would
6 not be able to do it on my own. I just get
7 Social Security, and that's all I live on. So,
8 it's just me, and I own my own home, so all the
9 repairs come, okay, I got to consider those,
10 too. If something happens to that home, I'm
11 responsible for it.

12 So to tell me that it is something that
13 you think my lines aren't working right or they
14 should be improved, I got to pay for it, I
15 don't think that's fair either. I have been
16 with Ameren for so long. I remember the meters
17 coming -- the meter readers. We don't have
18 them anymore. If they can't have access, you
19 know, I remember calling letting us know when
20 they were coming so they could have access; and
21 I know everything gets, what you call it,
22 modernized or whatever, but I had spoke earlier
23 about the meter on my house. Which that's
24 where the old one was, so I could put that one
25 there. Is it is monstrosity, okay? But it's a

1 means to an end, and I know we have to have it.

2 Like I said, the budget is a lifesaver for
3 me. And with my age, like I said, I'm 75, and
4 I've seen all the changes, you know. And I see
5 how the utility companies are working together
6 with steps they should be paying, which I have
7 not seen in my entire life. So I just want to
8 say I am against it because that 14 percent can
9 really help me a lot. Thank you.

10 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you.
11 Dana Grey.

12 (Dana Grey sworn.)

13 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Please state
14 and spell your name for the record.

15 MS. GREY: Dana, D-a-n-a, Grey, G-r-e-y.

16 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: What would
17 you like to tell the Commission?

18 MS. GREY: I'm here representing Tower
19 Grove Community Development Corporation. We're
20 an affordable housing provider in the City of
21 St. Louis, and we represent working class
22 families that earn roughly 30 to 80 percent of
23 the area median income. Though, the majority
24 of the City of St. Louis households are low to
25 moderate income, the working class families

1 today can no longer continue to absorb
2 increases in their utility costs; and I'd like
3 to ask the Commission also to consider that we
4 are soon facing an end to federally funded
5 LIHEAP and weatherization programs, which I'm
6 told will only have funding through the end of
7 August.

8 And then I would like to ask the
9 Commission to oppose decoupling that's been
10 requested by Spire, which would allow them to
11 increase rates in between rate cases.

12 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Thank you.

14 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Joy Denise
15 Dabney.

16 (Joy Denise Dabney sworn.)

17 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Can you
18 please state and spell your name for the
19 record?

20 MS. GREY: Joy Denise Dabney, J-o-y,
21 D-e-n-i-s-e, D-a-b-n-e-y.

22 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you.
23 What would you like to tell the Commission?

24 MS. DABNEY: So as I mentioned earlier, I
25 am the founder, and I work for a nonprofit

1 called Afaassa Ministries. I am also the 2024
2 sheriff candidate for St. Louis City. And
3 there's a very important reason on why I
4 mention that. First, I would like to say that
5 honestly one change that should be made, the
6 question and answering portion should be three
7 minutes, and the testimony portion should be
8 five minutes, especially seeing as how you say
9 the testimony portion holds more weight, has
10 more bearing. So just a suggestion.

11 So, I going to try to squeeze all this in
12 in three minutes. As I stated earlier with my
13 not-for-profit, I -- I have a lot of clients
14 who have had issues with their utilities being
15 disconnected. And as you mentioned earlier,
16 you do -- you are you partnered with several
17 other not-for-profit organizations across the
18 city and county. Here's the problem with that:
19 several of those organizations are running out
20 of funding as of right now as a matter of fact.
21 At least 90 percent of those organizations do
22 not have the adequate funding to be able to
23 assist everyone. Me, personally, myself with
24 my not-for profit, I like to say that I'm a
25 one-woman show. I actually have gone to my own

1 personal bank account to assist my clients.

2 As a not-for-profit, I don't see a lot of
3 donations. I actually put out more than I get
4 in as it should be with not-for-profits. A lot
5 of not-for-profits, it's the other way around.
6 They're talking in more than what they're
7 getting out, and I'm against that. But with
8 that being said, another question that I had
9 asked people, and I don't know if you all heard
10 that you may have not had to deal with the
11 situation experience of having to boil or
12 microwave your water because your gas is turned
13 off to do simple household chores or bathe
14 children, and, you know, that is an issue that
15 I believe a lot of people are unaware of; and
16 when I asked the question every one of you all
17 said you have never experienced that.

18 So that means you don't have -- you can't
19 have empathy for something you don't
20 understand, and that's okay. But I just wanted
21 to bring awareness to that. The reason that
22 I've mentioned my run in 2024 for sheriff is
23 because something that I had stated at several
24 of my forums, and, someone has, you know, had
25 made the mention of CEO making a -- what his

1 salary was; I, as a candidate, was still
2 appalled at the salary of the sheriff, and I
3 made a suggestion, I said, start with me, lower
4 my salary. Cut my salary in half. If cutting
5 my salary in half will put back out the funds
6 that's needed for the community, then I'm
7 willing to take that loss. And not to say
8 that, you know, we expect your CEO to not, you
9 know, accept what his salary is, but sometimes
10 we have to figure out where -- where do we
11 start.

12 And if I -- as also, I don't consider
13 myself anything but -- I actually come from
14 poverty, so if I can be in a situation where I
15 go into my own bank account to help my
16 community, then why can't a large corporation
17 such as Spire figure out more recourses for
18 that to be able to help our community. Thank
19 you very much.

20 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Ma'am, can
21 you come back to the podium?

22 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Well, I'm not --
23 this makes so much more sense. Good afternoon,
24 Ms. Dabney.

25 MS. DABNEY: Good afternoon.

1 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: I saw your name on
2 the election-related stuff, so it's good to put
3 a face with the name. But would you tell me
4 again the name of your nonprofit.

5 MS. DABNEY: Afaasa Ministries.

6 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Spell it for me,
7 please?

8 MS. DABNEY: Afaasa, A-f-a-a-s-a, and
9 that's stands for Arthur's Fight Against
10 Autism, and Seven Afflictions because my baby
11 brother was a victim of an illegal organ
12 harvesting, so I founded the nonprofit in 2019
13 because of him.

14 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Thank you. Thank
15 you very much.

16 MS. DABNEY: Yes, ma'am, thank you.

17 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Jennifer
18 Vogt.

19 (Jennifer Vogt sworn.)

20 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Would you
21 please state and spell your name for the
22 record.

23 MS. VOGT: Jennifer Vogt, J-e-n-n-i-f-e-r,
24 V-o-g-t.

25 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: You may

1 proceed.

2 MS. VOGT: Good afternoon, thank you for
3 having this opportunity to speak. I am a
4 customer in O'Fallon, Missouri, and I'm very
5 concerned about the 15 percent increase. I
6 think that's way too high for the community to
7 absorb. If you look at the salaries of the top
8 officials at Spire, and they're getting
9 percentages of 5 percent increases on top of
10 that. A 15 percent increase on the people is
11 way too much. And comments about two to three
12 million for the lineworkers; I feel like the
13 lineworkers need to get more money.

14 I am a lifelong customer of Spire. I have
15 nothing bad to say about the company, but I do
16 question their efficiencies and operations. We
17 are -- last summer, our meter got replaced in a
18 nine-year home, and it made no sense to us that
19 nine year old equipment should be replaced. So
20 I don't think they have a good plan for being
21 efficient and replacing the oldest equipment
22 and kind of spanning things out in a better way
23 to manage their costs. So because of that, I
24 am very leery that their other costs and
25 expenses are not managed properly. And I don't

1 think this kind of forum where you have a pie
2 chart with 81 percent, and we don't see what is
3 any of those percentages.

4 I also question seeing -- that doesn't --
5 that's not enough information; not enough
6 transparency for the public of where the money
7 goes. And I'm questioning Spire advertisement
8 that I see. Why does -- I don't have any other
9 choice but to use Spire, so why do you spend
10 money on advertising?

11 So I would just like to say I'm against
12 the rate increase, and I think Spire needs to
13 absorb more of the cost. We don't get an
14 upfront opinion on how they spend their money.
15 Then they shouldn't be able to come and ask for
16 that high of a price afterwards. Thank you.

17 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Joan Lane.

18 MS. LANE: Good afternoon.

19 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Good
20 afternoon.

21 (Joan Lane sworn.)

22 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you.
23 Would you please state and spell your name for
24 the record?

25 MS. LANE: Joan Lane, J-o-a-n, L-a-n-e.

1 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: You may
2 proceed.

3 MS. LANE: I've been at my home for 32
4 years, and I have got a new furnace because the
5 old furnace was eating up high expenditures.
6 And, now, when I got my furnace seven years
7 ago, my heat bill went down, and I was so
8 happy. Now each year since 2022, the bill has
9 been going up. Last year, my highest bill was
10 300. This year, it's 500. And it took me two
11 months to pay that off. And I am still trying
12 to take care of food, heat, everything that a
13 homeowner has to do. They put a freeze on our
14 taxes, which I thought was good for senior
15 citizens, so power needs to put a freeze on
16 senior citizens spending for rates.

17 Also, we have had rates from MSD, from
18 Spire, from Ameren, and for groceries and for
19 our everyday living taxes. So we are really,
20 really struggling as a middle class person to
21 take care of our bills and be independent,
22 because we do not want our children to end up
23 taking care of us. And this Spire junk is
24 really too high. If they even be more
25 reasonable with a two percent, that would be

1 even better. Thank you.

2 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you.
3 Jim Steitz.

4 MR. STEITZ: Hello.

5 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Hi.

6 MR. STEITZ: Jim Steitz, S-t-e-i-t-z, I
7 live in the South city.

8 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Can I swear
9 you in?

10 MR. STEITZ: I'm sorry.

11 (Jim Steitz sworn.)

12 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: You may
13 proceed.

14 MR. STEITZ: One small point, one large
15 point. The small point is that we were advised
16 in Spire's information packet that we have the
17 Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
18 available to us. I presume this was prepared
19 before recent events. This program no longer
20 exists unless the courts move with
21 uncharacteristic speed, outpacing this White
22 House. This has been deleted and fed into the
23 wood chipper, as they say. So, in so far as
24 PSC is counting on LIHEAP to alleviate the
25 impact of this rate increase on your customers,

1 you should put this out of your mind entirely.
2 It's not relevant. And anything else that
3 relies upon federal funding should be regarded
4 highly uncertain at best.

5 My larger point is kind -- is inquiring as
6 to why Spire costs per unit time per customer
7 are increasing. I didn't get clarity on that
8 initially. However, in looking at that huge
9 and conveniently unpartitioned orange ledge
10 there, I am concerned and suspicious that we're
11 actually paying for the expansion and building
12 of more fossil methane infrastructure. That it
13 is more pipelines hooked up to more gas
14 furnaces, more -- more gas stoves out in
15 St. Charles or wherever.

16 In particular, like the law recently
17 enacted that allows Spire to recoup its
18 investments ahead of time rather than after the
19 facts, amounting to a loan that we have
20 privileged of giving Spire. These gas
21 appliances have been ferociously promoted by
22 the fossil methane train lobby over and against
23 more sane appliances like gas -- like induction
24 stoves, heat pumps, et cetera. Besides the
25 economic unfairness of this on a microeconomic

1 level, this is not an allowable -- should not
2 be an allowable cost because scientists have
3 told us that this is something that we
4 absolutely cannot do if we wish for this planet
5 to be in one piece and to sustain a climate
6 that will afford our children the quality of
7 life that we should wish for them if we do, in
8 fact, love them.

9 Spire should not be allowed to spend money
10 on that; they should only be allowed to spend
11 money on things such as patching the gigantic
12 gas leak that I encountered on my way here at
13 Jamieson Avenue and Arsenal Street, and smelled
14 from a hundred feet away opposite a fire truck
15 that had the street blocked off. Ideally, to
16 prevent that, in fact.

17 In fact, that should be really the only
18 increase that Spire should be allowed, it
19 should be to increase your surveillance,
20 repair, and speed and comprehensiveness of
21 repair of leaks on your existing
22 infrastructure. Beyond those costs, your
23 profit margin really should be set with respect
24 not to an arbitrary expectation of investors,
25 but with respect to the actual real physical

1 world in which by the end of the century, we
2 really should presume that Spire will not exist
3 in its current form, because this whole
4 business of extracting millions of years of
5 fossilized hydrocarbons from the ground and
6 burning that to heat things and then dumping
7 the carbon into the atmosphere is a habit that
8 we will have gotten over.

9 Scientists have told us that we must do
10 this. They are telling us this unambiguously
11 with ever increasing levels of panic in their
12 voice, and that overarching reality really is,
13 to coin a phrase, the elephant in the room.
14 That should be there informing every other
15 thought we have concerning this rate increase
16 and everything else concerning Spire. Thanks.

17 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you.
18 Legal Services of Eastern Missouri.

19 (Kimberly Finnegan sworn.)

20 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Can you
21 please state and spell your name for the
22 record?

23 MS. FINNEGAN: Yes, my name is Kimberly
24 Finnegan, K-i-m-b-e-r-l-y, F-i-n-n-e-g-a-n.

25 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Okay. You

1 may proceed.

2 MS. FINNEGAN: So, as I just stated my
3 name is Kimberly Finnegan. I'm a licensed
4 attorney and clinical social worker with Legal
5 Services of Eastern Missouri. I am here today
6 with several of my colleagues, and we have
7 prepared a written testimony to submit in this
8 case as well, but I'd like to provide those
9 remarks to you all today.

10 Since 1956, Legal Services has provided
11 free legal representations and education to
12 more than 1 million low-income households with
13 civil legal issues representing housing law,
14 family law, public benefits, consumer fraud,
15 healthcare, domestic violence. We span five
16 offices in 21 counties in the City of St. Louis
17 and Missouri going all the way from the Iowa
18 border to Potosi.

19 And of the clients that we serve for every
20 100 people that contact us, we have to turn
21 away 70 of those people. And, so, we work to
22 advance justice through our legal
23 representation, our education and supportive
24 services. We partner with the community to
25 improve lives, promote fairness and increase

1 opportunities for those who are in need. And
2 given our knowledge and understanding of how
3 current Spire rates impacted clients across
4 Eastern Missouri, Legal Services of Eastern
5 Missouri believes the request filed by Spire on
6 November 25, 2024, with a proposed rate
7 increase of approximately 15 percent, which
8 will raise the average customer's bills \$14 per
9 month will further harm our client population.

10 Utility access and affordability are
11 central to our mission because our clients are
12 already unfairly and disproportionately carrying
13 the burden of high energy cost, and this comes
14 with grave risks to their health. And this is
15 before any proposed rate increases. Legal
16 Services continues to see an influx to the
17 number of clients and communities struggling to
18 afford basic utilities. Despite our best
19 efforts to connect them with assistance
20 programs. In most of the households that are
21 experiencing housing issues are simultaneously
22 experiencing issues keeping up with their
23 utility bills.

24 It's a systematic failure, and an
25 impossible choice between maintaining natural

1 gas service and meeting their basic needs for
2 health safety and wellbeing. And as we know,
3 on May 16, the St. Louis area was impacted by a
4 tornado that devastated the region causing
5 death to five people and damage to more than
6 5,000 buildings. It left many areas residents
7 without those essential utility services. It
8 is undisputed that the aftermath of the storm
9 not only leaves behind that physical damage but
10 impacts the mental health of community members.

11 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Ma'am, if
12 you can complete your thought, we can take that
13 as a Commission Exhibit, you said it's written
14 down.

15 MS. FINNEGAN: I believe we have submitted
16 it electronically.

17 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Okay.

18 MS. FINNEGAN: But I can -- I can
19 conclude. So, we just want you to take note
20 that with the storms impacting the area, our
21 clients are experiencing post-traumatic stress
22 disorder, and a heightened level of stress that
23 they have not experienced before coupled with
24 those rising utility costs, and we ask the
25 Public Service Commission today to oppose that

1 rate increase on behalf of our low income
2 clients and those we serve throughout the
3 community. Thank you.

4 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you.
5 Bruce, I'm not sure your last name. Is it
6 Finley? It's a complete guess. Is there a
7 Bruce? Okay. Fredrick Doss.

8 (Fredrick Doss sworn.)

9 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Can you
10 please state and spell your name for the
11 record?

12 MR. DOSS: My name is Fredrick Doss,
13 F-r-e-d-r-i-c-k, D-o-s-s.

14 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: You may
15 proceed.

16 MR. DOSS: I appreciate the opportunity to
17 speak today. So thank you much, in this case,
18 Spire is requesting an average increase of \$14
19 a month for residential customers. For many
20 households like mine, that's probably a
21 manageable cost. I'm single. I'm able bodied,
22 and I've got no kids. But for many low income
23 families, \$14 represents a real hardship.

24 To put it in perspective, SNAP benefits
25 provide about \$6 per day per person for food.

1 So this rate would be the equivalent to the
2 cost of five or six meals each month, and that
3 trade-off is very real for many Missourians.
4 Spire says the increase is needed for
5 infrastructure improvements and operating
6 costs; but over the last decade the company has
7 already received multiple rate increases each
8 with the same stated purpose.

9 During that time, Spire's operating
10 revenue in Missouri, this is over the last ten
11 years, has grown from under 500 million to over
12 a 1 billion dollars. It's collecting 54
13 million dollars annually through the ISSR
14 surcharge for system replacements. So what
15 you're asking for, we're already paying for.

16 Meanwhile, Spire also reported nearly 350
17 million dollars in net income last year. And I
18 just want to say that again: 350 million
19 dollars in net income. For anyone who's
20 counting, that's a million bucks a day. 1
21 million dollars a day. That's not a sign of
22 financial distress. That's -- that's a sign of
23 financial health, not a company in distress.
24 And while profit is a normal and expected part
25 of regulated utility's operations, we get it.

1 It's important to make profit. It's also
2 important to ask whether this rate increase is
3 necessary and fair especially given the
4 economic pressures customers are facing.

5 It's also worth noting that the Commission
6 itself recently ordered Spire to improve
7 customer service practices after widespread
8 reports of disconnections and delays in
9 reconnections. So it's talking longer to
10 reconnect the folks that have been
11 disconnected. So before any further increase
12 is approved, the public deserves assurance that
13 these issues are being addressed and current
14 revenues are being used effectively.

15 So given all of this context, I think this
16 rate proposal feels a bit out of step with the
17 economic reality for many of Spire's customers
18 and it is inconsistent with the expectation of
19 a regulated monopoly, because as someone
20 mentioned earlier, you advertise but we don't
21 have a choice. We have to buy your services.

22 So I respectfully urge the commissioners
23 to take a close look at the full picture and
24 consider denying these requests. Thank you for
25 your time.

1 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Jessica.

2 MS. LAMBRECHT: Lambert?

3 (Jessica Lambrecht sworn.)

4 MS. LAMBRECHT: My name is Jessica
5 Lambrecht, J-e-s-s-i-c-a, L-a-m-b-r-e-c-h-t.
6 Good afternoon, commissioners. I'm a homeowner
7 in Missouri who will be directly impacted by
8 Spire's proposed rate increase. Over the last
9 several years, I've invested nearly 30,000
10 dollars in energy efficiency upgrades to my St.
11 Louis City home that's over 100 years. Things
12 like a new roof, added insulation and a new
13 HVAC system, all of which has been regularly
14 noted on Spire's reminder of how to create a
15 more energy efficient home.

16 So I've done all of these things, but I
17 cannot afford to continue with the upgrades. I
18 also want to note that I made well above the
19 median average household income in the State of
20 Missouri, and I am denied through banking and
21 other loan office options to be able to make
22 these improvements on my home that I'm
23 regularly encouraged to do by Spire and other
24 organizations. So I done everything I can to
25 reduce my gas usage, but to lower my bills and

1 reduce my household emissions, yet even with
2 those upgrades, my monthly energy costs are
3 still significant.

4 If I simply cannot afford to make any more
5 of the improvements that Spire recommends to
6 customers while making the above medium average
7 household income, I doubt many other Spire
8 customers can as well.

9 So, I have the means to make these major
10 upgrades, and the little bit I can do, how can
11 we expect renters, low income families and
12 homeowners with fewer resources to shoulder
13 another rate increase? Many folks have no
14 control over the efficiency of their homes in
15 terms of renters and many landlords aren't
16 incentivized to make these improvements,
17 causing families to have to pay higher bills.
18 So without strong programs and financial
19 assistance to help people reduce these -- their
20 gas consumption, asking folks to pay more each
21 month feels out of step with your reality on
22 the ground.

23 We tell folks to use gas but we haven't
24 made it financially possible for many of them
25 to do so. In a city with so many older homes

1 that often need improvements to make heating
2 and cooling efficient, we're wasting gas
3 resources, and as we will continue to have
4 regardless of the cash flow that Spire will
5 gain. This is not an efficient use of the
6 limited energy resources we have. And, now,
7 we're asking folks to pay even more for the
8 resource we're already struggling to afford.
9 If we're going to raise rates, we need to pair
10 that with real investments and affordability,
11 efficiency and assistance. Otherwise, we're
12 just shifting more burden on the very people
13 who have the least ability to adapt.

14 I urge the Commission to consider the
15 broader context of this rate increase and to
16 deny the request unless and until there's a
17 comprehensive plan in place to help all
18 customers reduce this energy burden. Thank you
19 for your time.

20 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you.
21 Kathleen Hearoun.

22 (Kathleen Hearoun sworn.)

23 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Would you
24 please state and spell your name for the
25 record?

1 MS. HEAROUN: Kathleen Hearoun,
2 K-a-t-h-l-e-e-n, H-e-a-r-o-u-n.

3 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: You may
4 proceed.

5 MS. HEAROUN: My name is Kathleen Hearoun,
6 and I am a disabled person, individual, and I
7 just wanted to say the 15 percent increase is a
8 lot. I am already struggling. In my hand, I
9 have a stack of my Spire bills, because over
10 the last few months, and I'm sorry, but I do
11 have a cognitive disability, so I might stumble
12 a lot. But over the last few months, I do have
13 a PCA that comes to my home to assist me and
14 we've been struggling just to figure out the
15 gas bill.

16 The balance is zero, and it shows four
17 hundred and something dollars, and I have to
18 pay it immediately as in today. And I didn't
19 have it. And when I called to speak to
20 customer service, they were, like, no, you just
21 got to pay it today. Well, I don't have
22 anybody to help me today, and I have a list of
23 people that I can call, but they don't have
24 money. So, there goes that -- the end of day,
25 it's Spire working with the people that they

1 serve. I am a human being, but I'm not being
2 treated as a human being for a service that I
3 am paying for.

4 The price increase is going to affect --
5 is going to affect me. I'm on a very limited
6 income since my accident and became disabled.
7 Fortunately, I do have children who, you know,
8 they're doing pretty good and they do help me.
9 I don't want to call my children every month
10 for assistance. That they went to college take
11 care of their families and not necessarily me
12 because of an increase in bills that we don't
13 have to have. If the company was not seeing a
14 huge profit, then I can see them saying, hey,
15 look, we got to raise your rates; but if you're
16 receiving a nice profit, why are you passing
17 the cost on to me for me to pay every month?
18 That's your company. You got to figure out
19 what you got to do in your finances to sure up
20 your company since it's a publically traded
21 company, I understand.

22 So I understand you want to return ROIs to
23 investors, but don't put the burden on the
24 people who are out here trying to survive every
25 day. And I am literally trying to survive

1 every day. So keep that in mind as you go
2 through all of that, and luckily enough, when I
3 stepped out in the hallway, they were able to
4 assist me a little bit; but I really want Spire
5 to keep in mind that they're -- not everybody
6 is wealthy or well off. You know a point in
7 time in my life, we had at least over \$100,000
8 in income. That's not the situation right now.
9 It is a day-to-day situation, and if you want
10 to try to eat healthy and not eat junk food and
11 give your body apples and bananas and all of
12 that, 14 dollars a lot. Eggs are very
13 expensive, we all know that. So all I'm asking
14 is to consider the people, and we only have
15 you -- and I'm asking the commissioners to
16 please not give them this 15 percent increase.
17 Thank you.

18 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Susanne
19 Franza Valdez.

20 (Susanne Franza Valdez sworn.)

21 MS. FRANZA VALDEZ: Susanne Franza Valdez
22 S-u-s-a-n-n-e, F-r-a-n-z-a, V-a-l-d-e-z. Ms.
23 Coleman, I would like you to know that I'm here
24 today to see you and the members of the Public
25 Service Commission. I am here also because I

1 was notified of the hearing today concerning
2 Spire's request for a rate increase. I think
3 it's critical, Ms. Coleman, that for all these
4 people who are here today who are you giving
5 such valid, well-stated requests for
6 consideration of whether or not you provide
7 this rate increase.

8 Several years ago, I spent a lot of time
9 looking at how issues related to the Public
10 Service are reviewed and studied by this
11 commission. And what I came to understand was
12 that those of us who are residents of the State
13 of Missouri have little or no knowledge about
14 who the Commission is and who these wonderful
15 people are who provide you staff report. I
16 spent almost an entire week after my neighbor
17 had a critical water break that did
18 increasingly, as it went on, damage to their
19 house.

20 It struck me then that there should be
21 some way for individuals who had that kind of
22 physical damage to their homes to come to the
23 Public Service Commission and say something
24 didn't work well with the water. So, I'm not
25 here really to comment on my gas, but to say to

1 the Commission, you have a critical
2 responsibility to the citizens of the State of
3 Missouri to make sure, number one, that the
4 rates are at a payable level; and that when
5 services needed, that people like the lady and
6 gentlemen who were here today now how to let us
7 know how we come to them and say we have a
8 problem. That should be available every day or
9 week every month of the year that we don't rely
10 on this type of this opportunity to talk to you
11 about the problems we're having with public
12 service.

13 I don't know how you solve that problem
14 directly, but our public service counsel and I
15 have talked about it, and I think that much
16 more should be done to let us know how and when
17 we have questions and concerns about water,
18 gas, heat, cooling, that that's something we
19 can do on an everyday basis. So, Ms. Coleman,
20 I'm asking you and the other members of this
21 commission to think about your role serving us,
22 right?

23 Your role is to serve the citizens of the
24 State of Missouri. So I would like to see and
25 hear you all take more responsibility for that

1 other than this opportunity to come and talk to
2 you on days like today. Let's let -- let us
3 know that you're out there, and that you will
4 communicate with us on a regular basis. I say
5 thank you to all the people who are here today
6 who have given you their very clear and concise
7 reasons for talking to you today about gas.

8 I'd like to end this note by saying
9 something to Spire. I had a problem. Almost
10 two days before Thanksgiving when the house
11 that I was renting was frigidly cold. And at
12 6:30 in the morning, sometime around 6:30 in
13 the morning, I called Spire. And I want to say
14 thank you because when I made that phone call,
15 with almost within minutes, someone was at my
16 front door to say I'm here to help you, okay?
17 And that gentlemen helped me. Beyond all
18 belief, that gentlemen helped me. I even got
19 the new meter reader box. So, thank you for
20 that. I think you do provide an outstanding
21 service, but maybe there are other ways to
22 think about how we pay for that service. Thank
23 you.

24 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you.
25 Is there a Bruce? Is there anyone who else

1 would like to offer their comments today?

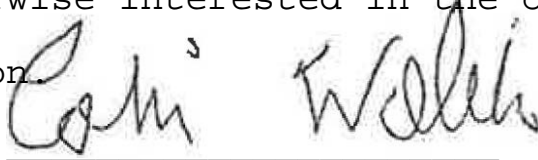
2 Commissioner Coleman, would you like to give
3 closing remarks?

4 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Thank you so much
5 everyone for coming today. You have certainly
6 provided us with enlight-- enlightenment. Lots
7 of good public testimony. It is appreciated.
8 The commissioners and I do take what you say
9 seriously. And I appreciate the fact that so
10 many have come out in the middle of the day to
11 provide this information. Thank you for your
12 interest. Thank you for your passion. Do note
13 that our goal is to weigh all the evidence and
14 come up with the best possible solution. Thank
15 you so much and safe travels home.

16 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE FEWELL: Thank you
17 everyone for appearing here and testifying. If
18 you have any additional comments or know
19 someone who could not be present today, but
20 would like to comment: you may make written
21 comments by going to the PSC website or by
22 contacting the Office of Public Counsel or
23 appearing at another of our local public
24 hearings. This hearing is now adjourned.

25 (Ending time of the hearing: 2:16 p.m.)

1 I, Colin Wallis, in and for the State of
2 Missouri do hereby certify that the witness
3 whose testimony appears in the foregoing
4 Examination Under Oath was duly sworn by me;
5 that the testimony of the said witness was
6 taken by me to the best of my ability and
7 thereafter reduced to typewriting under my
8 direction; that I am neither counsel for,
9 related to, nor employed by any of the parties
10 to the action in which this examination was
11 taken, and further that I am not relative or
12 employee of any attorney or counsel employed by
13 the parties thereto, nor financially or
14 otherwise interested in the outcome of the
15 action.



17 within and for the State of Missouri
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