

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE
STATE OF MISSOURI

FILED⁴

JUL 15 2003

Name: Jordan Ross
Complainant

vs.

Company Name: Laclede Gas
Respondent

Missouri Public
Case No. Service Commission

COMPLAINT

Complainant resides at 12150 Royal Valley Drive
(address of complainant)
St. Louis, MO 63141

1. Respondent, Laclede Gas
(company name)
of 720 Olive St. St. Louis, MO 63101
(location of company), is a public utility under the
jurisdiction of the Public Service Commission of the State of Missouri.

2. As the basis of this complaint, Complainant states the following facts:

We paid our bills from Laclede Gas in full every month based on their estimated charges when living at 4449 Pershing Ave. St. Louis, MO 63108. Upon moving out we were given a bill for the remainder of the balance, which amounted to \$634.86. Their under-estimation of the bill was so incredibly off, they undercharged us an average of \$140 a month. Our gas bills from Laclede were only \$50 a month, when we apparently really owed around or over \$200 per month according to the final reading. We received NO notice for the opportunity to have our meter read, and NO indication that they had tried to read it. We did nothing wrong. Our bills were paid and we believed that they were a representation of what we owe, not about 25% of what we really owed. Laclede failed at providing their customer with accurate readings and bills, even though according to Laclede rep Steve, the bills the previous 3 yrs w/ former tenants had reached over \$180 a month, so why were we 'estimated' only \$50 a month? Someone at Laclede messed up, and we should not suffer the intense burden of paying for their mistake.

3. The Complainant has taken the following steps to present this complaint to the Respondent:

After receiving the first bill, we contacted Laclede and spoke to a variety of representatives (including Mrs. Patterson), who basically stated that Laclede was in fact at fault, and they were sorry for their mistake, but that was that, and we needed to pay the money! On 5/20/03, I spoke to Steve, a Laclede rep. who told us that the past 3 yrs. of bills at 4449 Pershing w/ former tenants were significantly higher (up to \$180 a month) than what we were estimated at, and that there was a mistake made on the part of the company in our estimated charges being so low (around \$50 a month). On 5/21/03 I spoke to Steve's supervisor, Ms. Scott, who confirmed that ~~the bills~~ we were billed incorrectly and could not confirm that we were ever given a notice to get on actual gas readings by Laclede. She was very short and rude, and said her supervisor, Mr. Lauer, would call us back, but he never did. This is when we began discussing the case with Missouri Public Service Commission.

WHEREFORE, Complainant now requests the following relief:

Under Laclede Gas Rules and Regulations, it clearly states that estimated bills will not be sent for more than three consecutive months unless certain extenuating circumstances apply. The circumstances of the gas meter's not being read in this situation are not extenuating, they are just because Laclede failed to do so. There was no attempt to read our gas meter, therefore, it is their fault that we received such a ridiculously large final bill, and since it was their mistake, we should not suffer for it. It should be the responsibility of Laclede Gas to pay for this bill, since it was their mistake that we received it ~~at all~~ at all.

6/8/03 Date

 Signature of Complainant

Attach additional pages, as necessary.
Attach copies of any supporting documentation.

~~Mrs. Scott~~
~~wil CB~~
~~Mr. Layer~~
~~DID NOT~~
~~CB~~
~~Full~~
~~Letter~~
~~6016~~
Missouri
Public Service
Commission
Ltr w/ person
taking care of
case

fact that the company was not able to provide me with the information I requested. I do not feel that is completely unacceptable for you to do this to your customers. I want to know how our estimated bills were decided on. Who comes up with this number and how do you fail so miserably quoting accurate rates for your customers. Also, it seems totally wrong that for five months and one week of living at this residence, my total gas bills were \$926.58. We are not talking about heating a four bedroom house here, just a small two bedroom apartment. I feel that a mistake was made in the reading of the meter, and a mistake was made in the billing. I have never had an experience like this before and cannot believe that I having to deal with this now. Your prompt attention to this matter is appreciated.

★ Original letter
sent to Lachde
(sorry for the scribble notes)

Jordan Ross
12150 Royal Valley Drive
St. Louis MO 63141 314-265-0101

FROM: Jordan Ross
RE: Laclede Gas Bill at 4449 Pershing
DATE: June 17, 2003

Dear Ms. Leonberger,

I am writing in response to the recent letter sent to me regarding the Laclede gas bill for 4449 Pershing Ave. My argument with Laclede is that they underestimated our gas bill by such an incredible amount. We were being billed for approximately \$50. a month, when Laclede claims the actual meter readings would have been \$180.00 a month, though this may be true, the fact that we were underestimated by approx. \$130.00 a month is the problem. I was even told by Steve, a rep at Laclede on May 20th, that the previous 3 years the bills had been that high (\$180.) for that apartment...so why were we underestimated?

Under Laclede Gas Rules and Regulations (rendering and payment of bills paperwork sent to us by you), it clearly states that estimated bills will not be sent for more than three consecutive bills unless certain extenuating circumstances apply. However, none of these conditions apply to our situation. Laclede never made any attempt to read our gas meters, and never left notices or mailings indicating their attempts to obtain meter readings, and it clearly states in this literature that Laclede must do that. We were not once offered the service from Laclede of having our meters read to obtain accurate information, so I know that Laclede did not uphold their end of the services. Also, it states that the company must obtain accurate records of the reason for the estimate and the effort made to secure a reading. I would like to view these records and see when Laclede claims to have tried and read our meters, because I know they did not make a single effort.

In conclusion, it clearly states that Laclede Gas must use actual meter readings for billing unless the customer makes it unnecessarily difficult, which we absolutely did not do and we feel that we should be compensated for Laclede's error in billing. I argue this because as a customer who does not have extra money I rely on these companies to accurately bill so that I can know what I owe. Paying for this huge bill that is because of Laclede's mistake is extremely unfair to me as a customer.

Tracy, I sincerely appreciate your efforts in helping us dispute this.

Thank you,

Jordan Ross
314-265-0101

★ letter sent to
Missouri Public Service
Commission