

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

In the Matter of the Application of Ozark	)	
Energy Partners, LLC for a Certificate of	)	
Convenience and Necessity to Construct	)	
and Operate an Intrastate Natural Gas	)	
Pipeline and Gas Utility to Serve Portions	)	Case No. GA-2006-0561
of the Missouri Counties of Christian,	)	
Stone and Taney, and for Establishment of	)	
Utility Rates.	)	

In the matter of the Application of	)	
Southern Missouri Gas Company, L.P.,	)	
d/b/a Southern Missouri Natural Gas, for a	)	
certificate of public convenience and	)	
necessity authorizing it to construct,	)	
install, own, operate, control, manage and	)	Case No. GA-2007-0168
maintain a natural gas distribution system	)	
to provide gas service in Branson,	)	
Branson West, Reed's Spring and	)	
Hollister, Missouri.	)	

**PUBLIC COUNSEL'S RESPONSE IN
SUPPORT OF CONSOLIDATING CASES
AND EXTENDING THE HEARING DATE**

COMES NOW the Missouri Office of the Public Counsel and in response to the Commission inquiry into consolidating cases and extending the hearing, states:

1. Public Counsel supports a Commission decision consolidating Case Nos. GA-2006-0561 and GA-2007-0168. These cases involve nearly identical issues, and the parties are the same. It would be unnecessary and administratively burdensome on the resources of the Commission, the Commission's Staff, and the Public Counsel to conduct separate hearings in these matters.

2. Public Counsel also supports a Commission decision postponing the evidentiary hearing scheduled for November 27-28 in Case No. GA-2007-0168. The concerns filed in support of extending the hearing outweigh any foreseeable harm that could come from a delay. The Commission will likely need to wait until evidence from both cases is heard before issuing a decision in either case, and therefore, extending the evidentiary hearing date for Case No. GA-2007-0168 will not harm the interests of any party.

WHEREFORE, the Office of the Public Counsel respectfully offers these responses regarding case consolidation and the timing of the evidentiary hearing.

Respectfully submitted,
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC COUNSEL

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that copies of the foregoing have been mailed, emailed or hand-delivered to the following this 20th day of November 2007:

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