

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

TARIFF FILING OF COLUMBIA GAS OF	)	
KENTUCKY, INC. TO EXTEND ITS SMALL VOLUME	)	CASE NO.
GAS TRANSPORTATION SERVICE	)	2017-00115

COMMISSION STAFF'S FIRST REQUEST FOR INFORMATION  
TO COLUMBIA GAS OF KENTUCKY, INC.

Columbia Gas of Kentucky, Inc. ("Columbia"), pursuant to 807 KAR 5:001, is to file with the Commission the original and eight copies of the following information, with a copy to all parties of record. The information requested herein is due no later than April 10, 2017. Responses to requests for information shall be appropriately bound, tabbed and indexed. Each response shall include the name of the witness responsible for responding to the questions related to the information provided.

Each response shall be answered under oath or, for representatives of a public or private corporation or a partnership or association or a governmental agency, be accompanied by a signed certification of the preparer or person supervising the preparation of the response on behalf of the entity that the response is true and accurate to the best of that person's knowledge, information, and belief formed after a reasonable inquiry.

Columbia shall make timely amendment to any prior response if it obtains information which indicates that the response was incorrect when made or, though correct when made, is now incorrect in any material respect. For any request to which Columbia fails or refuses to furnish all or part of the requested information, it shall

provide a written explanation of the specific grounds for its failure to completely and precisely respond.

Careful attention should be given to copied material to ensure that it is legible. When the requested information has been previously provided in this proceeding in the requested format, reference may be made to the specific location of that information in responding to this request. When filing a paper containing personal information, Columbia shall, in accordance with 807 KAR 5:001, Section 4(10), encrypt or redact the paper so that personal information cannot be read.

1. Provide the most current number of residential and commercial customers participating in Columbia's Small Volume Gas Transportation Service ("SVGTS") tariff ("Choice program") and the date(s) the numbers were determined.

a. Explain whether the number of residential or commercial customers participating in Columbia's Choice program has increased or decreased, and by what amounts, since the program was last extended in Case No. 2013-00167.<sup>1</sup>

b. Provide the number of new participants that have enrolled in the Choice program since March 15, 2016, the end of the reporting period for Columbia's 2016 Annual Report on the Customer Choice program.

c. For new participants (enrollees since March 15, 2016), provide, for residential and commercial participants separately, the methods of enrollment (written, internet, telephone, etc.) and the numbers enrolled under each method.

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<sup>1</sup> Case No. 2013-00167, *Application of Columbia Gas of Kentucky, Inc. for an Adjustment of Rates for Gas Service* (Ky. PSC, Dec. 13, 2013).

d. Provide, for the period since March 15, 2016, the percentage of total throughput eligible for the Choice program that has been supplied by a marketer and the percentage that has been supplied by Columbia.

2. a. Provide a list of the marketers currently participating in the Choice program.

b. Explain whether there are participating marketers that are currently not actively recruiting customers.

c. Explain whether all participating marketers are actively recruiting both residential and commercial customers.

d. Provide a breakdown of the number of customers per marketer.

3. Refer to Case No. 2012-00132,<sup>2</sup> the results of the Choice program survey filed July 13, 2012. The Executive Summary, section 1.3, titled *Insights*, page 7, states:

While the survey was designed as a perception study, one of the most important and unexpected findings of the research was that Columbia Gas customers – both Choice and non-Choice – are not aware of how the Choice program works and what their options are. The Choice program depends on consumers being actively engaged in choosing a supplier and tracking savings over time. Yet the research shows that the average customer does not know enough about the program to make these educated decisions, and many customers do not even know if they are or are not participating in the Choice program. This lack of awareness and understanding is evident throughout the research findings.

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<sup>2</sup> Case No. 2012-00132, *Columbia Gas of Kentucky, Inc. Filing of Customer Choice Survey Results* (Ky. PSC Feb. 8, 2013).

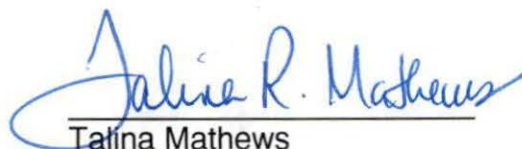
On page 8, the *Insights* section further states:

While satisfaction with the Customer Choice program is high, this study revealed that customer perceptions of the Choice program are muddled by a number of factors. First, many people do not know what the program is, what the benefits of joining are, or how to join. Second, it seems that many customers are confusing the Customer Choice program with the Budget Payment Plan. Third, customers do not know how to track their savings or compare the costs of marketers in the program. For the Customer Choice program to be most transparent and effective, and for customer perceptions of the program to be uninfluenced by other factors like the Budget Payment Plan, consumers need to be better informed about the options available to them. Only then can the Choice program be truly evaluated on its own merits.

Provide Columbia's plan for addressing each of the issues identified below. The response should include how participating marketers will be involved in the Choice program areas needing improvement.

- a. Lack of awareness on the part of both Choice and non-Choice customers of how the Choice program works and their options with regard to the program.
- b. Ensuring that participating Choice customers are actively engaged in choosing a supplier, how to track their savings over time, and how to compare the costs of marketers participating in the program.
- c. Ensuring that customers know whether they are participating in the Choice program.
- d. Educating customers with regard to the budget program so that it is distinguishable from the Choice program.

4. Provide a discussion of Columbia's long-range intentions with regard to the future of the Choice program. The discussion should include, but not be limited to, whether Columbia believes it should become a permanent program and whether it believes that its ongoing status as a pilot discourages greater marketer or customer participation.



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DATED MAR 23 2017

cc: Parties of Record

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