

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of

THE COMPLAINT OF MR. TROY E.)
BLACKBURN, INEZ, KENTUCKY)
AGAINST COLUMBIA GAS OF)
KENTUCKY, INC.)

CASE NO.
8479

O R D E R

The Commission received a letter from Troy Blackburn on March 1, 1982, concerning a \$904.17 gas bill he received from Columbia Gas of Kentucky, Inc. (Columbia). Mr. Blackburn protested the amount of a gas bill from Columbia based on Columbia's failure to read his meter within the time established by Columbia's tariff. Columbia reads its customers' meters bimonthly. The bill in question is calculated for 2 months and 23 days.

The basis of the complaint is that Columbia's failure to read the meter every 60 days caused a leak in Mr. Blackburn's line to go undetected for longer than it would have if the meter had been read on schedule, thus increasing his gas bill. The leak was discovered by Columbia following a service interruption in the area.

After informal discussions with the Commission staff, Columbia offered to adjust the account by \$372.84. The offer was not satisfactory to Mr. Blackburn, who requested a formal hearing.

The hearing was held on April 26, 1982, at the Commission's offices in Frankfort, Kentucky.

Having considered the evidence presented at the hearing and being advised, the Commission finds:

1. Columbia failed to read Mr. Blackburn's meter on schedule;

2. A leak of unknown origin was a factor in the size of the bill received by Mr. Blackburn;

3. It cannot be determined when the leak began or whether a timely meter reading would have detected the leak;

4. The offer of Columbia to adjust the bill by \$372.84 is fair and reasonable.

Based on these findings and the entire record, IT IS ORDERED:

1. That Columbia re-evaluate its present meter reading policies and make every effort to comply with its policy of bimonthly readings;

2. That Columbia hold open its offer to adjust the bill by \$372.84 for ten business days from the date of this order. If not accepted in writing by Mr. Blackburn within that period, Columbia may modify or withdraw the offer.

Done at Frankfort, Kentucky, this the 11th day of June, 1982.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Marlin M. Cook
Chairman

Katharine Randall
Vice Chairman

Len Carver
Commissioner

ATTEST:

Secretary