

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE SERVICE OF) CASE NO.
WESTERN ROCKCASTLE WATER ASSOCIATION) 90-084

O R D E R

This case originally arose out of separate complaints by Tammy Thomas and Judy Wilson that they were not receiving adequate water service from Western Rockcastle Water Association ("Western Rockcastle"). A hearing on the complaint was held before the Commission on March 8, 1991, and pursuant to that hearing, an Order was entered on April 3, 1991 directing Western Rockcastle to submit to the owners of the properties upon which Tammy Thomas and Judy Wilson reside a proposed agreement to install certain equipment designed to rectify their complaints and bring the system into compliance with Commission regulations. Western Rockcastle was able to reach an agreement with the owners of the property upon which Tammy Thomas resides, but was not able to reach an agreement with the owners of the property upon which Judy Wilson resides and the matter was, by Order entered July 18, 1991, reopened for further consideration.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Western Rockcastle is a water utility serving customers in Rockcastle County. Western Rockcastle does not operate a treatment plant, but instead purchases treated water from Mt.

Vernon and resells it to its customers. On September 8, 1989, a utility investigator for the Commission investigated the complaints made by two of its customers, Tammy Thomas and Judy Wilson, of inadequate service to their places of residence. Judy Wilson's residence is on property owned by her parents, Orville and Ruby Alcorn. Tammy Thomas's residence is on property owned by her and her husband, Robert Thomas. The investigation included placing a pressure recorder at their respective meters for one week. Readings from the pressure graphs produced by the pressure recorder indicated that pressure at the Wilson residence averaged 12 psig and pressure at the Thomas residence averaged between 25 and 30 psig. From these readings, the investigator concluded that Western Rockcastle was in violation of the minimum pressure requirements of 807 KAR 5:066, Section 6(1), which requires water utilities to maintain water pressure of not less than 30 psig at each customer's meter.

At the earlier hearing, Western Rockcastle admitted that the pressure at the Thomas and Wilson residences was below the pressure required by Commission regulations. To correct the problem, Western Rockcastle proposed that a hydropneumatic system, consisting of a small tank and pump, be installed in each customer's service line between the meter and residence as close to the residence as possible. The cost of installation to Western Rockcastle was estimated to be between \$500 to \$1,000 each. Following the first hearing, the Commission ordered on April 3, 1991, that Western Rockcastle present its proposal to the owners of the properties and seek a written agreement with them to

install the equipment. Western Rockcastle was able to reach an agreement with Tammy Thomas and her husband, Robert Thomas, but was not able to reach an agreement with the Alcorns and Judy Wilson. However, following the hearing, Western Rockcastle made improvements to the system as a whole which raised the pressure on the Thomas property above the minimum required and it became unnecessary to install the hydropneumatic system on the Thomas property. Although the same improvements also raised the pressure at the Wilson residence, the pressure at the Wilson meter continued to remain below the 30 psig minimum required by the Commission's regulation. However, additional improvements proposed for the water system should bring the Wilson line into compliance.

The proposed improvements called for the installation of a booster pump station and a storage tank at the point where Western Rockcastle takes water from the city of Mt. Vernon, and a transmission line from that point to the outer reaches of the system. When installed, these improvements should allow Western Rockcastle to distribute water throughout its entire system and maintain water pressure at all of its customers' meters, including the Wilson meter, which comply with Commission regulations. The project is anticipated to cost approximately \$600,000 and, to make the improvements, Western Rockcastle has applied for financial assistance to the Department of Local Government for a Community Development Block Grant, to the Appalachian Regional Commission, and to the Kentucky Infrastructure Authority.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

If Western Rockcastle is able to obtain financing for its proposed project, it should be able to solve the pressure problem at the Wilson meter without the necessity of installing a separate pump at that meter. Therefore, this matter should be held in abeyance until funding for the project is approved or denied.

Based upon the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that:

1. Western Rockcastle shall, within 30 days of the date of this Order and at 30-day intervals thereafter, report to the Commission on the status of its application for financial assistance to make the improvements that are proposed to increase the pressure throughout the system.

2. This matter shall remain on the docket pending further Orders herein.

Done at Frankfort, Kentucky, this 24th day of September, 1991.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION


Chairman


Vice Chairman

Commissioner

ATTEST:


Executive Director