

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

THE APPLICATION OF COLUMBIA GAS OF	)	
KENTUCKY, INC. FOR AUTHORITY TO	)	
IMPLEMENT A PERMANENT STATISTICAL	)	
METER SAMPLING PLAN FOR RESIDENTIAL,	)	CASE NO. 2000-429
INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL CLASS	)	
METERS AND FOR AUTHORITY TO DEVIATE	)	
FROM 807 KAR 5:006, SECTION 25(5)(b)	)	

O R D E R

On September 12, 2000, Columbia Gas of Kentucky, Inc. (“Columbia”) filed an application requesting permanent approval of its statistical gas meter sampling plan, pursuant to 807 KAR 5:022, Section 8(5)(c).<sup>1</sup> In Case No. 96-010, the Commission approved Columbia’s statistical gas meter sampling plan as a 5-year pilot and required Columbia to evaluate the plan and to elect to continue the plan or discontinue it no later than April 1, 2001.<sup>2</sup> The Commission also directed Columbia to file annual information reports concerning the overall efficiency of the plan.

In the present application, Columbia requests authority to continue its statistical gas meter sampling plan, including those modifications implemented in the 5-year pilot

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<sup>1</sup> This regulation allows a utility to adopt a scientific sample meter test plan which, if approved by the Commission would be in lieu of tests prescribed in 807 KAR 5:022, Section 5, and 807 KAR 5:006, Section 13(1).

<sup>2</sup> Case No. 96-010, The Application of Columbia Gas of Kentucky, Inc. For Approval of a Statistical Sample Meter Test Plan, Order dated May 14, 1996.

plan. Columbia also requested a deviation from the provisions of 807 KAR 5:006, Section 25(5)(b).

Pursuant to the Commission's 1996 Order, Columbia has filed annual reports providing results for each year of the pilot plan. Columbia states that the pilot plan proved to be safe and cost-effective. Columbia states that the primary purpose of the plan is the detection and early removal of any group of gas meters that does not meet prescribed performance standards. In its application, Columbia filed an evaluation of the pilot meter sampling plan. It states that the pilot plan has been successful in improving the quality of meters placed in service by identifying unacceptably performing meters and eliminating them from the system. Columbia states that the plan has been efficient in reducing the number of meters changed by 50 percent, and by realizing an average savings of \$309,130 per year compared to the costs of periodic testing. In its evaluation, Columbia recommends continuation of the statistical meter test plan.

Columbia will adopt and implement the plan based on American National Standards Institute/American Society for Quality Control Z1.4-1993, or latest edition, "Sampling Procedures and Tables for Inspection by Attributes."<sup>3</sup> The Commission finds that the plan as adopted by Columbia (and previously approved by the Commission for a period of 5 years) should now be approved on a continuing basis.

Columbia requests a deviation from 807 KAR 5:006, Section 25(5)(b), which requires checking the service regulators and vents based upon the meter testing period. 807 KAR 5:006, Section 25(b), while not dependent upon 807 KAR 5:022,

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<sup>3</sup> Response of Columbia, dated February 12, 2001, to Commission information request of February 1, 2001, Question 4.

Section 8(5)(a), adopts the intervals of periodic meter testing as a minimum for regulators, vents, and relief valve vent checks for satisfactory operations. However, when using the sample plan, not every meter will be periodically tested, only a statistical sample. This issue was addressed in Case No. 96-010, wherein Columbia stated that the customer regulator is checked in conjunction with the customer service line survey every first, third or fifth year.<sup>4</sup>

Columbia contends that all its service regulators have full internal relief valves equipped with vents open to the outside of the premises. Columbia states that, during 1982 and 1994, it physically surveyed each of its service regulators to make certain that all had full internal relief. Columbia confirms that the gas pressure on the customer meter and customers' house line piping would never exceed 1.5 psig, an amount which will not cause safety problems with appliances. Columbia states that the regulators are checked for satisfactory operation during the service line leakage survey, which is on a cycle of every one, three or five years.<sup>5</sup>

The Commission finds that Columbia's request for deviation from 807 KAR 5:006, Section 25(5)(b), should be granted.

Columbia should continue filing an annual report with the Commission which includes testing records, evaluation, cost savings, safety measures, service regulators' testing records, and overall efficiency of the plan.

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<sup>4</sup> Case No. 96-010, Appendix, Sample Testing Plan, page 6.

<sup>5</sup> Response of Columbia, dated February 12, 2001, to Commission's information request of February 1, 2001, Question 1.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that:

1. Columbia's request for approval of its statistical meter sampling plan, pursuant to 807 KAR 5:022, Section 8(5)(c), on a continuing basis, is granted, and said plan may be followed in lieu of the test prescribed in 807 KAR 5:022, Section 8(3) and (5), and 807 KAR 5:006, Section 16(1).

2. Columbia is granted a deviation from 807 KAR 5:006, Section 25(5)(b).

3. Columbia shall file an annual report for the statistical meter testing plan, as described by the above findings, no later than March 31, 2002, and shall file annual reports thereafter until further Orders of the Commission.

Done at Frankfort, Kentucky, this 26<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2001.

By the Commission

ATTEST:

  
Executive Director