

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

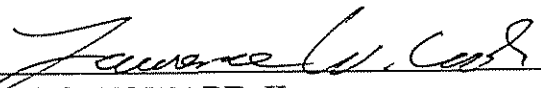
APPLICATION OF KENTUCKY )  
UTILITIES COMPANY TO FILE ) CASE NO. 2007-00565  
DEPRECIATION STUDY )

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S RESPONSES TO  
DISCOVERY REQUESTS OF KENTUCKY UTILITIES COMPANY

Comes now the Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, by  
and through his Office of Rate Intervention, and states as follows for his  
responses to the discovery requests of Kentucky Utilities Company.

Respectfully submitted,

GREGORY D. STUMBO  
ATTORNEY GENERAL



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*Certificate of Service and Filing*


Counsel certifies that an original and ten photocopies of the foregoing were served and filed by hand delivery to Beth O'Donnell, Executive Director, Public Service Commission, 211 Sower Boulevard, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601; furthermore, it was served by mailing a true and correct copy of the same, first class postage prepaid, to:

Hon. W. Duncan Crosby III  
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all on this 27<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2008.

  
Assistant Attorney General



**Attorney General's Responses to  
Kentucky Utility's Data Requests  
Case No. 2007-00565**

WITNESS RESPONSIBLE:

Michael J. Majoros

Question 1. On page 4, line 17, of Mr. Majoros's testimony he states that inflation for 2018, 2028 and 2038 are included in Mr. Spanos's study. Please state the basis for Mr. Majoros's assertion, citing specifically where and how Mr. Spanos includes in his study inflation for 2018, 2028, and 2038, and provide the basis for this assertion.

RESPONSE:

Mr. Majoros's explanation of why Mr. Spanos's proposals include future inflation starts at page 17 of his testimony. The use of 2018, 2028 and 2038 was an attempt to demonstrate the point. He could have used any future years of the remaining lives of these plant accounts to make the same point, since Mr. Spanos has front-loaded that future inflation into current rates.



**Attorney General's Responses to  
Kentucky Utility's Data Requests  
Case No. 2007-00565**

WITNESS RESPONSIBLE:

Michael J. Majoros

Question 2. On page 10 of Mr. Majoros's testimony he states, "Although the (Virginia State Corporation Commission) Staff approved KU's proposed lives and net salvage parameters, it did not approve the implementation of ELG ...." Does Mr. Majoros agree that the Virginia Commission Staffs opinions or recommendations are not binding on the Virginia Commission? Does Mr. Majoros agree that the recommendation by the Virginia Commission Staff will not be considered until KU files its next base rate case with the Virginia Commission?

RESPONSE:

Yes to both questions.



**Attorney General's Responses to  
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WITNESS RESPONSIBLE:

Michael J. Majoros

Question 3. On page 11, line 9, of Mr. Majoros's testimony he states, "(B)oth ALG and ELG assume full recovery and ELG will produce a depreciation expense increase." Does that imply that rate base in the future will be less using the ELG procedure? If not, please explain why not.

RESPONSE:

The statement does not imply anything. It is a simple statement of fact.





**Attorney General's Responses to  
Kentucky Utility's Data Requests  
Case No. 2007-00565**

WITNESS RESPONSIBLE:

Michael J. Majoros

Question 4. Assuming that historical plant balances continue to increase, would Mr. Majoros agree that the net salvage incurred would increase as well on average each year assuming retirements continued at the same rate? If not, please explain why not.

RESPONSE:

This question assumes that cost of removal is a function of retirements. However, cost of removal is really a function of additions since most additions result from replacements. Furthermore, cost of removal is, in many instances, merely an accounting allocation of a portion of the total replacement cost to cost of removal. Hence, as plant grows more cost of removal will be recorded, even if the allocation factor is only 5%.



**Attorney General's Responses to  
Kentucky Utility's Data Requests  
Case No. 2007-00565**

WITNESS RESPONSIBLE:

Michael J. Majoros

Question 5. Please provide complete citations to, and a copy of Mr. Majoros's testimony in, all of the administrative proceedings in which Mr. Majoros has testified concerning his present value method approach to cost of removal, and specifically state for each whether the commission or agency involved adopted or rejected the approach.

RESPONSE:

See attached summary of recent cases and all of Mr. Majoros's electric and gas depreciation testimony for the last 3 years. During that time Mr. Majoros typically put forth recommendations designed to remove future inflation from cost of removal.

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

### NARUC 1996 Public Utility Depreciation Practices Manual

Some commissions have abandoned the above procedure [gross salvage and cost of removal reflected in depreciation rates] and moved to current-period accounting for gross salvage and/or cost of removal. In some jurisdictions gross salvage and cost of removal are accounted for as income and expense, respectively, when they are realized. Other jurisdictions consider only gross salvage in depreciation rates, with the cost of removal being expensed in the year incurred.<sup>1</sup>

#### New Jersey

**Company:** Rockland Electric Company  
**Docket No.:** New Jersey BPU Docket Nos. ER02080614 and ER02100724  
**SK Witness:** Michael J. Majoros, Jr.  
**Order(s):** Initial Decision, June 20, 2003  
Summary Order, July 31, 2003

#### Discussion of Results:

The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities endorsed Mr. Majoros' testimony regarding SFAS No. 143, but used a net salvage allowance based on the average net salvage over a 10-year period, as recommended by Staff, instead of the five-year average recommended by Mr. Majoros.

As recommended by the Administrative Law Judge:

RECO calculates its test year depreciation expense to be \$5.194 million. RECO ib 128. RECO 30, Page 28-29. RECO 11A, Exhibit P-2, Page-11. The Ratepayer Advocate disputes the Company's figure and proposes a depreciation expense level of \$3,864,000. Rib-74. Ratepayer Advocate witness Majoros also recommended that the amortization of the Theoretical Reserve Difference should be \$1.103 million rather than the company's proposed amortization amount of \$588,000. Ratepayer Advocate would exclude depreciation of the enhanced service reliability program and depreciation of post-test year plant. R-51. RJH-17.

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<sup>1</sup> National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, Public Utility Depreciation Practices, August 1996 ("NARUC Manual"), page 157.

## **Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions**

Staff determined the depreciation expense to be \$3,971,000. Sib Exhibit P-2, Schedule 13-14. Staff added a 10-year average net salvage of \$150,000 to the total of \$3,821,100. Sib 74.

The main controversy in the depreciation issue concerns net salvage and cost of removal and the interpretation of Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. [143]. SFAS 143, paragraph B73. RECO rb Appendix 15.

Ratepayer Advocate witness Michael J. Majoros expressed his opinion that the company's depreciation proposal was unreasonable. In his pre-filed testimony Witness Majoros claims the Company's proposal will produce excessive depreciation and increase the revenue requirement. He also states the company's proposal is inconsistent with current thinking regarding cost, capital recovery and net salvage, particularly the cost of removal component of net salvage. R-36, Page 3. He traces the alleged excessive depreciation to a request for negative net salvage, which he claims, is unreasonable. R36-4. This results in an excessive revenue requirement. R-36-4. Witness Majoros recommends a depreciation expense of \$3,863,900. R-36-20.

RECO witness Hutcheson disagrees with Mr. Majoros proposal and alleges that Majoros approach is a results driven exercise designed to under state depreciation rates, that he has pushed the recovery of net salvage far out into the future thereby relieving rate payers who benefit from the plant serving them today from any cost responsibility for retirement and removal of such plant. It imposes a cost on customers who never benefited from the plant to pay for its removal.

Staff concurs in part with the Ratepayer Advocate, supporting the intellectual foundation of FAS143, which supports "unbundled" depreciation rates, rates that exclude embedded cost of removal provisions. Staff would favor a cost of removal expense based upon a 10-year window of actual experience rather than the 5-year average used by the Ratepayer Advocate. Sib-74. Staff supports a \$150,000 annual negative net salvage provision. Staff recommends a test year depreciation expense of \$3,971,000.

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

I **FIND** that the Staff's test-year depreciation expense of \$3,971,000 to be reasonable.<sup>2</sup>

The Board of Public Utilities further endorsed the position, modifying only the amortization period for the reserve excess:

Based on our review of the extensive record in this consolidated proceeding, the Board has determined that the Initial Decision, subject to certain modifications, which will be set forth herein, represents an appropriate resolution of this proceeding. Accordingly, except as specifically noted below, and as will be further explained in a detailed Final Decision and Order which shall be issued, the Board HEREBY ADOPTS and incorporates by reference as if completely set forth herein, as a fair resolution of the issues in this consolidated proceeding, the Initial Decision.<sup>3</sup>

All the parties in the base rate case agree that there is a significant excess depreciation reserve. The Company proposed a 20-year amortization of its calculated reserve excess of \$11.8 million. The RPA claimed the proper reserve excess was \$22.1 million, based upon the Company's asset lives, but excluding the Company's future net salvage assumptions from the depreciation rates. The RPA accepted the Company's proposal of a 20-year amortization. Both Staff and the ALJ adopted the RPA's recommendation. The Board HEREBY MODIFIES the Initial Decision so that the RPA's recommended level of excess reserve is amortized back to ratepayers over 10 years. The Board finds this to be an appropriate action in order to offset the increase associated with the deferred balances that were incurred over the 4-year transition period, as well as the increase in BGS charges for current service.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> I/M/O Rockland Electric Company, OAL Docket Nos. PUC 07892-02 and PUC 09366-02, BPU Docket Nos. ER02080614 and ER02100724, (Initial Decision, June 10, 2003), p. 47-49.

<sup>3</sup> I/M/O Rockland Electric Company, BPU Docket Nos. ER02080614 and ER02100724, Summary Order, July 31, 2003, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Id., page 3, item 3.

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

**Company:** Jersey Central Power & Light Company  
**Docket No.:** New Jersey BPU Docket Nos. ER0208056, ER0208057, EO02070417  
and ER02030173  
**SK Witness:** Michael J. Majoros, Jr.  
**Order(s):** Summary Order, August 1, 2003

### Discussion of Results:

The Board agreed with Mr. Majoros that the inclusion of net salvage in depreciation rates was inappropriate. It adopted Mr. Majoros' recommendation of a \$4.8 million net salvage allowance, based on the cost of removal included in JCP&L's test year budget for transmission, distribution and general plant.

As Ordered by the Board:

Depreciation Expense. The Company is requesting a net depreciation expense annualization adjustment of \$1,515,000 and total annualized depreciation expenses of \$114,547,000. The Company maintains that it is complying with the terms of a June 27, 1996 stipulation ("Final Stipulation") approved by the Board, by updating the book depreciation rate computations annually for plant additions, retirement, transfers and adjustments and keeping the negative net salvage rate percentages and depreciation service lives consistent with the separate Stipulation of Settlement of Depreciation Rates, also dated June 27, 1996, which was also approved by the Board as part of the Final Stipulation. *I/M/O the Petitions of Jersey Central Power & Light Company for Approval of an Increase in its Levelized Energy Adjustment Charge, Demand Side Factor, Implementation of a Remediation Adjustment Clause (RAC) Other Tariff Changes, Recovery of Crown/Vista and Freehold Buyout Costs, Changes in Depreciation Rates, Settlement of Phase 1 of the Board's Generic Proceeding on the Recovery of NUG Capacity Payments, Docket Nos. ER95120633, ER95120634, EM95110532, EX93060255 and EO95030398, (March 24, 1997).* The Board HEREBY FINDS, consistent with the recommendations of the RPA and Staff, that the Company's inclusion of net negative salvage value in depreciation rates is inappropriate and instead, HEREBY ADOPTS utilization of a net salvage allowance of \$4.8 million which is the cost of removal reflected in the Company's test-year budget for transmission, distribution and general plant. Accordingly, the Board



## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

HEREBY ADOPTS a depreciation expense in the amount of \$77,146,000.<sup>5</sup>

**Company:** Public Service Electric & Gas (Electric)  
**Docket No.:** New Jersey BPU Docket No. ER02050303  
**SK Witness:** Michael J. Majoros, Jr.  
**Order(s):** Decision and Order, Issued April 22, 2004

### Discussion of Results:

In the Company's 1997 Restructuring filing, the Company proposed extending the average life used to establish depreciation on the Company's distribution investment from 28 to 45 years, resulting in a 2.49% remaining life depreciation rate. That rate incorporated zero net salvage. The Company also proposed amortizing the resulting depreciation reserve excess over seven years. The Board agreed with the amortization of the reserve excess, however it adopted a three-year, seven-month amortization period. The Company began the amortization but continued to use the old 3.52% depreciation rate. The Company failed to change the rate to 2.49%.

In the 2003 case, Docket No. ER02050303, the Company did not submit a depreciation study. Instead, they proposed no changes to their existing distribution plant rates and changes to their general plant rates based on the rates resulting from a Settlement in their last gas base rate case.

Mr. Majoros recommended the use of the 2.49% depreciation rate consistent with the Company's proposal in the Restructuring filing. In addition, he calculated an additional reserve excess of \$115 million resulting from the Company's continued use of the 3.52% depreciation rate and recommended that excess be amortized over the remaining period of the initial reserve excess amortization. Mr. Majoros recommended that the additional excess be amortized over 2 years of the remaining of the original amortization period.

The Board agreed that the 2.49% rate should have been in use beginning in August 1999. The Board accepted a Settlement proposed amortization period of 29 months for the reserve excess. At the present time, the Company is using a 2.49% remaining life depreciation rate (for Distribution). The rate incorporates zero percent net salvage.

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<sup>5</sup> I/M/O Jersey Central Power & Light Company, BPU Docket Nos. ER0208056, ER0208057, EO02070417 and ER02030173, Summary Order, August 1, 2003, p. 6.

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

**Company:** Public Service Electric & Gas (Gas)  
**Docket No.:** New Jersey BPU Docket No. GR05100845  
**SK Witness:** Michael J. Majoros, Jr.  
**Order(s):** Decision and Order Adopting Initial Decision and Stipulation of Settlement, Issued November 9, 2006

### Discussion of Results:

In this case, the Company proposed a \$42.6 million increase in annual depreciation expense, relative to current depreciation rates based on December 31, 2003 plant balances. The increase was driven primarily by a large increase in distribution depreciation expense. General and common plant were not included in the Company's depreciation study. Of PSE&G's calculated annual depreciation expense (based on 2003 plant balances), over half related to estimated future costs of removal for non-legal AROs (\$72.1 million out of a total accrual of \$134.5 million). The Company also identified \$134.4 million relating to excess collections for cost of removal in its 2003 depreciation reserve. This is part of the regulatory liability for non-legal AROs identified by SFAS No. 143.

Mr. Majoros recommended that future net salvage be removed from the depreciation rates and replaced with a normalized net salvage allowance based on PSE&G's actual experience from 1999-2003. He also recommended that the \$134.4 million cost of removal reserve be amortized back to ratepayers over a three-year period. Finally, he recommended changes to two lives. Overall, Mr. Majoros's recommendations resulted in a \$74.5 million decrease based on December 31, 2003 plant balances.

This case was settled. The parties agreed to Mr. Majoros's depreciation rates, a \$6.375 million annual allowance for cost of removal, and a five-year amortization of the \$148.495 million cost of removal regulatory liability that existed as of December 31, 2005. Specifically:

3. The parties agree on the following changes to the Company's depreciation rates and accumulated gas plant depreciation reserve. The parties agree that the Company's composite gas-only plant depreciation rate shall be 1.644% based upon actual plant balances as of the end of the test year, September 30, 2005. The depreciation rates, as delineated in Attachment B to the Stipulation of Settlement, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, shall be applied to the corresponding functional accounts. The existing rates for common plant and General Gas Plant shall continue, as these rates were not at issue in this case.

As of December 31, 2005, the Company's depreciation reserve included \$148.495 million previously collected for

## **Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions**

Cost of Removal (COR) but not yet expended for that purpose. The parties agree that the Company will amortize accumulated depreciation reserve associated with COR at an annual rate of \$13.2 million. This \$13.2 million annual rate amortization will continue for a period of sixty (60) months, beginning with the implementation of the new base rates resulting from this proceeding. The Company shall not be entitled to recover any amounts claimed to be overpaid to ratepayers in the event the rates resulting from this proceeding remain in effect beyond the five-year amortization period.

The expense for COR recoverable through rates shall be \$6.375 million on an annual basis reflecting the average actual annual expenditure on COR for the five year period 1999 through 2003. The annual recovery as determined above will be charged to depreciation expense and credited to the depreciation reserve. Actual cost of removal incurred will continue to be debited to the depreciation reserve. Therefore, any over or under recovery of actual expense will be reflected in the depreciation reserve. The parties acknowledge that under this Settlement, the Board will continue the above policy to allow full recovery of and make the Company whole on its actual and prudently incurred cost of removal. All amounts associated with Cost of Removal which remain in the depreciation reserve will continue to be an offset to the Company's rate base. The parties reserve their rights to argue their respective positions as to the calculation of future remaining life depreciation rates in subsequent rate cases.

The Company has recorded in its depreciation reserve \$72.467 million associated with its legal Asset Retirement Obligation (ARO) for its gas plant as of December 31, 2005 for financial reporting purposes. The Company has also recorded a regulatory asset in conjunction with the legal ARO as of December 31, 2005 for financial reporting purposes. The Company has represented that it intends to continue to record the accretion of the legal ARO as a regulatory asset. As long as BPU policy provides for full recovery of actual Cost of Removal expenditures, the Company will not seek recovery of such regulatory asset, since that asset is extinguished as the actual Cost of

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

Removal is incurred and debited to the depreciation reserve, as described above.<sup>6</sup>

**Company:** Atlantic City Electric Company  
**Docket No.:** New Jersey BPU Docket No. ER03020110 et al  
**SK Witness:** Michael J. Majoros, Jr.  
**Order(s):** Decision and Order, Issued May 26, 2005

### Discussion of Results:

Atlantic City Electric did not file a depreciation study in conjunction with this rate case, choosing instead to maintain the existing rates, which were established in 1983. The existing rates were remaining life rates for the transmission and distribution functions, and whole-life rates for the general plant function. The rates did not include a provision for net salvage.

Testifying for the Ratepayer Advocate, Mr. Majoros performed a complete depreciation study. As a result of that study he recommended a change in rates. Mr. Majoros calculated remaining life rates for the transmission and distribution functions, and whole-life rates for the general plant function, consistent with the Company's existing rates. He also recommended a net salvage allowance based on the Company's 5-year average net salvage experience.

In discovery, the Commission Staff had Mr. Majoros prepare calculations of whole-life rates for transmission and distribution, along with a calculation of the reserve excess/deficiency. These calculations were apparently used in the settlement, as noted below.

This was a settled case. The parties agreed to the following regarding depreciation:

The Signatory Parties agree to a change in depreciation technique to the Whole Life Method with an amortization of any calculated excesses or deficiencies in the depreciation reserve, and a separate annual allowance of \$2.9 million for net salvage. Atlantic will track this annual net salvage allowance separately within depreciation expense and accumulated depreciation and will track actual net salvage. As a result of the change in depreciation rates set forth in paragraph 3, and this change in technique, there will be a net excess depreciation reserve of \$130.974 million. This

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<sup>6</sup> I/M/O Public Service Electric and Gas Company, BPU Docket No. GR05100845, Decision and Order Adopting Initial Decision and Stipulation of Settlement, November 11, 2006, p. 4.

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

amount will be amortized over approximately 8.25 years, beginning on the date the rates resulting from this Stipulation become effective e, on a cents per kWh basis, applicable to all kWh to which the Company's Transition Bond Charge is applied. The rate impact of this adjustment is approximately \$15.8 million.<sup>7</sup>

### Pennsylvania

The 5-year rolling net salvage allowance approach is used by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission in utility cases.<sup>8</sup> The allowance is incorporated as a separate specifically identifiable amount in depreciation expense. Depreciation rates do not incorporate future net salvage factors.

### Vermont

**Company:** Central Vermont Public Service Corporation  
**Case No.:** Vermont Docket Nos. 6946 and 6988  
**SK Witness:** Michael J. Majoros, Jr.  
**Order(s):** Order, Issued March 29, 2005

### Discussion of Results:

Testifying for the Vermont Department of Public Service ("DPS"), Mr. Majoros recommended the use of a net salvage allowance based on a 5-year average of actual net salvage experience. As the Company had been experiencing positive net salvage on average, Mr. Majoros recommended \$0 net salvage allowance. In addition, Mr. Majoros recommended that CVPS be required show collections for net salvage separately from accumulated depreciation through the use of subsidiary accounts.

While the Board did not implement Mr. Majoros' recommendation to use a \$0 net salvage allowance, the Board did agree to the separate tracking of net salvage collections:

The DPS has highlighted an important policy issue — in contrast to collections for depreciation, which enable the utility to recover costs that it has already incurred, collections for net salvage are, in essence, prepayments by ratepayers

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<sup>7</sup> I/M/O Atlantic City Electric Company, BPU Docket Nos. ER03020110, ER04060423, EO03020091 and EM02090633, Decision and Order Adopting Initial Decision and Stipulation of Settlement, May 26, 2005, pages 5-6.

<sup>8</sup> See Penn Sheraton et. al. v. Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, 198 Pa. Super. 618, 184 A. 2d. 234 (1962).

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

for expenses that the utility estimates it will incur at some point in the future. This is a significant distinction, and one that persuades us that collections for net salvage should be tracked and reported separately from other funds collected via depreciation expense. For this reason, we accept the DPS's recommendation that we require CVPS to follow the recording and reporting requirements of FERC Order 631 for Vermont jurisdictional ratemaking purposes. In other words, CVPS must track and report its prior and future net salvage collections in a separate subsidiary account, and we expect this separate account to be shown in future cost-of-service filings.<sup>9</sup>

### California

**Company:** Southern California Edison Company  
**Case No.:** California Application 04-12-014  
**SK Witness:** Michael J. Majoros, Jr.  
**Order(s):** D.06-05-016, issued May 11, 2006

### **Discussion of Results:**

In this case, the Company requested an increase in depreciation expense of \$150.4 million (based on 2003 plant balances), which was a 36% increase in depreciation expense. The increase was primarily driven by cost of removal estimates, both those proposed by the company, and the "reserve deficit" the Company calculated because it believed its current cost of removal estimates were too low.

Mr. Majoros testified on behalf of The Utility Reform Network ("TURN"). Although he accepted all of the Company's proposed service lives, he recommended the following:

I recommend that the regulatory liability [\$2.1 billion as of December 31, 2004] resulting from SCE's collection of excessive non-legal ARO charges be separated from accumulated depreciation and specifically recognized by the CPUC as a regulatory liability for regulatory reporting, regulatory analysis and ratemaking purposes in California. I recommend that the CPUC consider whether to maintain this regulatory liability as a permanent rate base offset representing customer-provided or to amortize it back to

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<sup>9</sup> Investigation into the Existing Rates of Central Vermont Public Service Corporation, Docket Nos. 6946 and 6988, Order, Issued March 29, 2005, page 114.

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

ratepayers over some fixed period. In either case, the regulatory liability would remain as a rate base offset until fully amortized.<sup>10</sup>

On a going-forward basis, I recommend that non-legal ARO recovery be separated from the capital recovery component of depreciation. The capital recovery depreciation rates, reflecting Mr. Pierce's life and curve requests are shown on Exhibit\_\_\_(MJM-11). Beyond that, I recommend that TIFCA be discontinued, and that any one of the following approaches be approved: cash basis, normalized net salvage allowance, or net present value basis. I do not recommend the SFAS No. 143 approach because these are not legal AROs and because that method is too complicated.<sup>11</sup>

The Company fought hard against Mr. Majoros' recommendations, including the recognition of the regulatory liability. In addition to its own depreciation witness, Mr. Pierce, SCE put forth rebuttal testimony from William Stout of Gannett Fleming, Inc., and Jan Umbaugh of Deloitte & Touche. Furthermore, two other California utilities submitted testimony rebutting Mr. Majoros – San Diego Gas & Electric Company and Pacific Gas & Electric Company.

On May 11, 2006 the California PUC voted out its decision. Concerning Mr. Majoros' recommendation regarding the recognition of a regulatory liability for past collections for cost of removal, the CPUC stated:

TURN's request that the balance of funds collected for cost of removal related to non-ARO assets be recognized as a regulatory liability for ratemaking purposes is reasonable and will be adopted.<sup>12</sup>

The CPUC adopted the Office of Ratepayer Advocates' ("ORA") recommendations for net salvage, which were based on a 15-year historical period, as opposed to SCE's 10-year historical period. These come in between Mr. Majoros and the Company. It also stated that "in its next GRC, SCE should, as part of its account-by-account analysis, analyze the effects of past inflation on its proposed cost of removal rates and justify the implicit inflation rates reflected in its proposed rates."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Application of Southern California Edison Company, A. 04-12-014, Majoros Direct Testimony, pp. 43-44.

<sup>11</sup> Id., p. 44.

<sup>12</sup> Application of Southern California Edison Company, A. 04-12-014, D.06-05-016, page 204, also Finding of Fact 122.

<sup>13</sup> Id., page 208, also Conclusion of Law 33.

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

**Company:** Pacific Gas & Electric Company  
**Case No.:** California Application 05-12-002  
**SK Witness:** Michael J. Majoros, Jr.  
**Order(s):** D.07-03-044, issued March 15, 2007

### **Discussion of Results:**

In the Opinion adopting the Settlement Agreement in this case, the Commission modified the Settlement Agreement to include "a requirement for PG&E to record a regulatory liability for \$2.1 billion that PG&E has collected in rates but not yet spent to retire and remove assets from service."<sup>14</sup>

As stated in the Opinion:

Our adoption of a regulatory liability for PG&E's pre-funded removal costs is consistent with our resolution of the same issue in the most recent SCE GRC proceeding. There, we held that:

TURN's request that the balance of funds collected for cost of removal...be recognized as a regulatory liability for ratemaking purposes is reasonable and will be adopted. The balance...is substantial, amounting to \$2.1 billion as of the end of 2004. This balance is already recognized as a regulatory liability for financial reporting purposes. SCE has not demonstrated any potential harm to the company...Formal recognition of our ratemaking responsibilities is a reasonable course of action and will establish regulatory certainty regarding ratemaking treatment and principles that all parties generally agree is appropriate. (D.06-05-016, *mimeo.*, p. 204.)

We see no reason to treat PG&E differently from SCE.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Application of Pacific, Gas & Electric Company, A.05-12-002, D. 07-03-044, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*, p. 217-218.



## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

### Missouri

**Company:** Laclede Gas Company  
**Case No.:** Missouri GR-99-315  
**SK Witness:** None  
**Order(s):** Second Report and Order, Issued June 28, 2001

### **Discussion of Results:**

In this case, the Commission Staff recommended that Laclede's future cost of removal be based on the actual cost of removal the Company was experiencing. The Commission agreed:

Currently, Laclede is recovering more in depreciation for net salvage than it is spending. In addition, ratepayers will pay \$2.3 million more in depreciation annually under Laclede's method of calculation. Under Laclede's theory, it would be allowed to recover from its *current* customers the estimated cost of *future* expenditures. Laclede has no definite plans for the removal of the major assets involved in this net salvage calculation. Laclede is not currently spending funds on the removal or salvage of these assets. Laclede's arguments for spreading the costs of the removal of these assets among different generations of customers were not persuasive because of the uncertainty of how much cost will be incurred for removal, when the removal will occur, or if the removal will occur at all. Therefore, the Commission finds that Laclede has failed to meet its burden of showing that its depreciation calculation for net salvage is just and reasonable. Laclede has not shown why it is just and reasonable to recover from its current customers more than its current expenditures for net salvage.

The Commission finds that Staff's proposed calculation of net salvage cost is just and reasonable. Staff's proposed calculation will allow Laclede to collect from its current customers the amount Laclede is currently expending for final net salvage cost for mass property accounts. Staff's calculation will also allow recovery of the amount Laclede is expending for interim cost of removal for life span property accounts. Thus, Staff's calculation will allow Laclede to recover the amounts it is currently spending for net salvage without overrecovering from its ratepayers, which is a just and reasonable result. This level of net salvage is adequate to allow Laclede to fully recover the net salvage of all plant.

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

The Commission finds, therefore, that the calculation of net salvage cost in this case shall be performed in accordance with Staff's recommendations. Thus, current depreciation rates should reflect a net salvage component of the depreciation rate that, when multiplied by the plant balance, gives an annual accrual consistent with the current net salvage amounts experienced by Laclede. Laclede's current depreciation rates reflect this computation, and therefore, should remain unchanged, with the exception of Account 362, Gas Holders. This will result in an annual accrual of \$21,054,647.<sup>16</sup>

Laclede appealed the Commission's decision to the Circuit Court of Cole County (Case No. 01CV325280) and then to the Missouri Western District Court of Appeals (Case No. WD61486). The appeal was dismissed and remanded to the Commission, with the instruction to provide clearer, more detailed findings of fact.<sup>17</sup>

The Commission reopened the case to take further evidence on the issues of depreciation and net salvage on May 4, 2004.<sup>18</sup> On January 11, 2005, Missouri's Public Service Commission reversed its position. However, it did require Laclede to separately track net salvage in the depreciation reserve.<sup>19</sup>

**Company:** Empire District Electric Company  
**Case No.:** Missouri ER-2001-299  
**SK Witness:** None  
**Order(s):** Report and Order, Issued September 20, 2001.

### **Discussion of Results:**

In this case, the Commission Staff again recommended that future net salvage be based on actual experience, and expensed, rather than be bundled into depreciation rates. The Commission agreed, stating:

The Staff and Empire also disagree on whether depreciation rates should include net salvage value. Inclusion of net

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<sup>16</sup> I/M/O Laclede Gas Company's Tariff to Revise Natural Gas Rate Schedules, Case No. GR-99-315, Second Report and Order, Issued June 28, 2001, pages 3-4.

<sup>17</sup> I/M/O Laclede Gas Company's Tariff to Revise Natural Gas Rate Schedules, Case No. GR-99-315, Order Directing Filing of Proposed Findings of Fact, Issued February 27, 2004, page 1.

<sup>18</sup> I/M/O Laclede Gas Company's Tariff to Revise Natural Gas Rate Schedules, Case No. GR-99-315, Order Setting Hearing and Prehearing Conference, Issued May 4, 2004, page 1.

<sup>19</sup> I/M/O Laclede Gas Company's Tariff to Revise Natural Gas Rate Schedules, Case No. GR-99-315, Third Report and Order, Issued January 11, 2005.

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

salvage value creates the need to project the date that plant will be removed, the cost of removal at the time it is removed and the gross salvage value, for plant that may never be removed or at least not be removed for some considerable time after it is retired. Unit 6 at Empire's Riverton site was retired, but presently remains on site. This uncertainty provides sufficient grounds to reject Empire's determination of net salvage cost. The Staff's approach of treating net salvage cost as an expense based on Empire's recent historical data reduces this uncertainty. Additionally, separately stating net salvage cost, rather than incorporating it in depreciation rates, appropriately identifies the significance of net salvage cost on rates. The Commission finds that net salvage cost considered in setting rates should be based on historical net salvage cost that Empire has actually incurred in the recent past and that it should be treated as an expense.<sup>20</sup>

The Commission Staff's treatment of net salvage remained unchanged in Empire's next rate case, Case No. ER-2002- 424. As stated in the Stipulation in that case, "consistent with existing Staff policy, the depreciation rates agreed to by the Parties do not include a provision for net salvage (cost of removal less salvage). Instead, net salvage has been included in the income statement in determining cost of service based upon the Company's actual historical experience."<sup>21</sup>

**Company:** Empire District Electric Company  
**Case No.:** Missouri ER-2004-0570  
**SK Witness:** Michael J. Majoros, Jr.  
**Order(s):** Report and Order, Issued March 10, 2005

In Empire's most recent rate case, Case No. ER-2004-0570, Empire once again requested to incorporate net salvage as a component of depreciation rates. The Commission Staff recommended expensing net salvage, consistent with their existing policy, and Empire's existing rates. Mr. Majoros, testifying on behalf of the Office of Public Counsel, recommended a net salvage allowance based on the most recent five-years experience. On March 10, 2005, the Missouri PSC reversed its prior position.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> I/M/O Empire District Electric Company's Tariff Sheets etc., Case No ER-2001-299, Report and Order, Issued September 20, 2001, page 11.

<sup>21</sup> I/M/O Empire District Electric Company, etc., Case No. ER-2002-424, Report and Order, Issued November 14, 2002, Attachment A, page 4.

<sup>22</sup> I/M/O Empire District Electric Company, etc., Case No. ER-2004-0570, Report and Order, Issued March 10, 2005.

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### Oklahoma

**Company:** Empire District Electric Company  
**Cause No.:** Oklahoma PUD 200300121  
**SK Witness:** Mr. Majoros acted as consultant to the Commission, but not as witness.  
**Order(s):** Order No. 478532, Issued July 31, 2003

### **Discussion of Results:**

In this case Empire District Electric Company proposed the same depreciation rates that were ordered by the Missouri Public Service Commission in Case No. ER-2001-299. In other words, the depreciation rates proposed by the Company did not include a provision for net salvage. The Staff of the Oklahoma Corporation Commission agreed with the Company's proposal, specifically noting the net salvage issue.

Staff's two major depreciation related issues are the salvage value and life assumptions made by the Missouri's Staff. Staff finds the salvage cost assumption as presented by the Missouri Commission acceptable. The first reason being that the Missouri Commission rejected Empire's proposed ratio of current net salvage (Gross Salvage less Cost of Removal) to the same Plant's original cost as a factor to multiply times current plant balance to estimate the net salvage that it anticipates will be required to remove the currently active plant from service decades in the future. Doing so would have helped Empire calculate a net salvage that is negative, nil, or positive meaning that the net salvages [sic] becomes a cost. The net result in this case is a net salvage cost than [sic] can be as large or larger than the original cost of the same plant. Missouri proposed that the Company collect net salvage at the current level that the Company is experiencing. The Missouri Commission also determined that Empire would have collected \$1.5 million more annually than it was spending for net plant removal (Net Salvage Cost).<sup>23</sup>

This case was settled in Order No. 478532, dated July 31, 2003. The Joint Stipulation and Settlement Agreement attached to that Order did not discuss depreciation.

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<sup>23</sup> I/M/O Empire District Electric Company, Cause No. PUD 200300121, Prefiled Responsive Testimony of Mutombo Lukasu, page 25.

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

### Kentucky

**Company:** Jackson Energy Cooperative Corporation  
**Case No.:** Kentucky 2000-00373  
**SK Witness:** Michael J. Majoros, Jr.  
**Order(s):** Order, Issued May 21, 2001

#### **Discussion of Results:**

Testifying for the Attorney General, Mr. Majoros recommended the use of a net salvage allowance based on a 5-year average of actual net salvage experience for distribution plant. The Commission agreed with his recommendation:

The Commission agrees with the AG. ... Concerning the treatment of net salvage, while the Commission agrees that net salvage is normally recovered as part of the depreciation rates, the AG has offered persuasive reasons supporting a departure in this case from the normal approach. The Commission finds that it is reasonable under these circumstances to use the average net salvage allowance approach proposed by the AG. This approach should be utilized until Jackson Energy undertakes a new depreciation study.<sup>24</sup>

**Company:** Fleming-Mason Energy Cooperative Corporation  
**Case No.:** Kentucky 2001-00244  
**SK Witness:** Michael J. Majoros, Jr.  
**Order(s):** Order, Issued August 7, 2002

#### **Discussion of Results:**

Mr. Majoros testified on behalf of the Attorney General in this proceeding. As in the Jackson Energy case, he recommended the use of a net salvage allowance:

The AG proposes that the net salvage component normally included in depreciation rates be recovered using an average net salvage allowance approach, which is similar to the approach adopted for Jackson Energy. Under the AG's proposal, an amount representing the 5-year average net salvage experience is added to the distribution plant remaining life depreciation expense in lieu of Fleming-

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<sup>24</sup> I/M/O The Application of Jackson Energy Cooperative for an Adjustment of Rates, Case No. 2000-373, Order Issued May 21, 2001, pages 33-34

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

Mason's proposed net salvage ratios. The amount should be prorated to the accounts in proportion to actual net salvage experience. The AG recommends this approach for at least the next 5 years, at which time another depreciation study could be conducted.<sup>25</sup>

Fleming-Mason has not offered comments on nor expressed concerns about the AG's proposal.<sup>26</sup>

The Commission agrees with the AG. While the Commission agrees that net salvage is normally recovered as part of the depreciation rates, the arguments offered by the AG are persuasive reasons for supporting a departure in this case from the normal approach. The Commission finds that it is reasonable under the circumstances in this case to use the average net salvage allowance approach proposed by the AG. This approach should be utilized until Fleming-Mason undertakes a new depreciation study.<sup>27</sup>

### Kansas

**Company:** Westar Energy, Inc. / Kansas Gas & Electric Company  
**Docket No.:** Kansas No. 05-WSEE-981-RTS  
**SK Witness:** Michael J. Majoros  
**Order(s):** Order on Rate Applications, Issued December 28, 2005  
Order on Petitions for Reconsideration and Clarification, Issued February 13, 2006  
Kansas Industrial Consumers Group, Inc. v. Kansas Corporation Comm'n, 35 Kan. App. 2d\_\_\_, \_\_\_P.3d\_\_\_(No. 96,228, filed July 7, 2006)

### Discussion of Results:

Mr. Majoros testified on behalf of the Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board ("CURB"), Kansas Industrial Consumers ("KIC") and the Unified School District No. 259. Regarding net salvage, Mr. Majoros recommended the following:

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<sup>25</sup> I/M/O Adjustment of Rates of Fleming-Mason Cooperative, Case No. 2001-00244, Order Issued August 7, 2002, pages 22-23.

<sup>26</sup> Id., page 23.

<sup>27</sup> Id.

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

I also recommend discounting all of Mr. Spanos' dismantling and future cost of removal parameters to their fair net present value, using a 3 percent inflation factor. I recommend that the Commission split depreciation rates into separate capital recovery and cost of removal components. Finally, I recommend that the KCC specifically recognize the refundable regulatory liability resulting from Westar's collection of excessive non-legal ARO charges. The KCC should recognize this as a regulatory liability for regulatory reporting, regulatory analysis, and ratemaking purposes in Kansas.<sup>28</sup>

In revised tables to his testimony, Mr. Majoros later adopted some of the recommendations of Commission Staff witness Larry Holloway – specifically the recommendations to removal terminal net salvage from the calculation and to combine the rates for transmission and distribution for the two Companies.

The Commission sided with the Company in this case on all issues. However, Westar appears to have agreed to the use of a regulatory liability to track the funds recovered for terminal net salvage:

To prevent double counting, Westar recommended that the Commission find that amounts recorded to Account 108 for terminal net salvage are treated as a regulatory liability for ratemaking purposes. Westar Reply Brief, 37n15.<sup>29</sup>

Consistent with Westar's concession, the Commission orders that a regulatory liability should be recorded to track the funds recovered.<sup>30</sup>

Mr. Majoros' clients filed Petitions for Reconsideration. The Commission did not change its recommendation; however, it did offer some clarification regarding the regulatory liability for terminal net salvage:

The Commission reminds the parties that its intent in tracking the terminal net salvage values separately and determining that the amounts should be considered a liability is to establish the fact that Westar has an obligation to refund to ratepayers any amount of terminal net salvage not used for demolishing, dismantlement or

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<sup>28</sup> I/M/O Westar Energy, Docket No. 05-WSEE-981-RTS, Majoros Direct Testimony, pp. 35-36.

<sup>29</sup> I/M/O Westar Energy, Docket No. 05-WSEE-981-RTS, Order on Rate Applications, Issued December 28, 2005, p. 44.

<sup>30</sup> Id., p. 45

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

otherwise removing plant. The point is this: The regulatory liability will track these funds collected for terminal net salvage and will ensure that when Westar dismantles existing plant to make room for additional generation, the cost of that dismantlement will not be capitalized and added to rate base.<sup>31</sup>

The Commission also stated the following regarding the inclusion of inflation in the calculation of future terminal net salvage:

CURB argued the issue is whether the time value of money is considered. From the Commission's view of the evidence presented, it is clear that the Spanos study did inflate the terminal net salvage values to reflect an estimate of the future cost to dismantle. Based on the record, the Commission believes this approach is appropriate. The Commission recognizes this approach is controversial. Therefore, policy regarding the depreciation concepts of terminal net salvage value and inflating terminal net salvage values is best determined in a generic proceeding. While the facts in this case clearly support the inflation of terminal net salvage values to meet future costs, the Commission's decision should not be viewed as establishing general policies regarding terminal net salvage value.<sup>32</sup>

The case was appealed to the Kansas Court of Appeals by CURB, KIC and USD 259 in 3 separate appeals. In the appeal, the Petitioners took "issue with the Commission's order permitting Westar to depreciate its facilities by including 'terminal net salvage' costs adjusted for inflation."<sup>33</sup>

Petitioners argue there was not substantial competent evidence to support the use of terminal net salvage depreciation because there was no evidence Westar had or ever planned to completely dismantle any of its retired facilities. Accordingly, they contend the inclusion of terminal net salvage depreciation was speculative. Petitioners also contend the inflation adjustment adopted by the Commission was not supported by substantial competent evidence.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> I/M/O Westar Energy, Docket No 05-WSEE-981-RTS, Order on Petitions for Reconsideration and Clarification, Issued February 13, 2006, p. 49.

<sup>32</sup> Id., pp. 52-53 (emphasis added).

<sup>33</sup> Kansas Industrial Consumers Group, Inc. v. Kansas Corporation Comm'n, 35 Kan. App. 2d\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_P.3d\_\_\_\_(No. 96,228, filed July 7, 2006). (no page numbers)

<sup>34</sup> Id.



## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

The Court agreed with the Petitioners.

Based upon a review of the entire record, we agree the Petitioners have reason to complain about the Commission's order concerning depreciation. There was no concrete evidence before the Commission that Westar ever intended to actually dismantle any of its existing steam generation plants at any time in the future. The evidence indicated the Ripley plant had not been used as a generating facility since 1987, but was still standing. There was no evidence that substantial dismantling had been planned regarding any facility which had even been partially taken out of generation. Despite testimony about Westar's plans to increase generating capacity, none of Westar's witnesses actually testified to any likelihood that the company would dismantle plants in the future and build new plants on the same site.<sup>35</sup>

We are not rejecting the inclusion of terminal net salvage depreciation if and when it is supported by evidence before the Commission. We note the Commission has permitted the use of terminal net salvage depreciation in a prior rate case without any objection by the parties, which included KIC. We also note that regulatory commissions in other states have permitted terminal net salvage depreciation. However, in order to uphold an order permitting terminal net salvage depreciation, we conclude there must be *some evidence* that the utility has a reasonable and detailed plan to actually dismantle a generating facility upon retirement. Westar presented no evidence of even tentative plans in this case, even after the Commission's staff and the intervenors vociferously objected to the lack of any plans. Instead, Spanos' testimony was based upon case studies from other areas and was completely speculative as to the realities of Westar's operations. Even the specific survey referred to by Majoros indicated that only 15 out of 86 facilities in other states were dismantled upon retirement. However, based on the Commission's order, Westar would be entitled to include terminal net salvage depreciation in 100% of its steam generation facilities.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Id.

<sup>36</sup> Id.

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The Commission essentially acknowledges the problem with its depreciation order by determining that Westar would be required to make detailed showings in *future* rate cases in order to recover costs for terminal net salvage. The future standard was derived from Holloway's testimony, which apparently was rejected by the Commission in *this case* but will be adopted by the Commission in future cases. While it is commendable for the Commission to require a higher standard of evidence in future rate cases, this determination only adds to the arbitrary nature of the Commission's order in this case.<sup>37</sup>

The Commission's adoption of Spanos' depreciation calculations using an inflation adjustment is even more troubling. Although the Commission permitted terminal net salvage depreciation in a prior rate case without objection by the parties, the Commission's prior order did not include the inflation adjustment as calculated by Spanos in this case. Thus, the Commission's order represented a departure from prior policy without an explanation by the Commission for doing so. See *Western Resources, Inc. v. Kansas Corporation Comm'n*, 30 Kan. App. 2d 348, Syl. ¶ 7, 42 P.3d 162, rev. denied 274 Kan. 1119 (2002) (when an administrative agency deviates from a policy it had adopted earlier, it must explain the basis for the change). Other than Spanos' conclusory testimony, there was no evidence before the Commission to support the adoption of the inflation adjustment in calculating depreciation costs. Holloway and Majoros testified in considerable detail that the inflation adjustment was improper under the circumstances and resulted in charging future inflation to current customers. According to Majoros' testimony, Spanos' inflation adjustment nearly tripled the cost of Westar's depreciation as determined in 2001.

Determining an appropriate depreciation expense is a complex issue in any rate case and inherently involves "speculation" to the degree it requires projection of future events. See *Western Resources, Inc.*, 30 Kan. App. 2d at 368-73. However, the need to project future events is not license for the Commission to engage in unchecked speculation. The effect of the Commission's order turns on its head the general principle that changes in rates due to

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<sup>37</sup> Id.

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

future or nontest year events be, at least to some degree, known and measurable. See *Kansas Industrial Consumers*, 30 Kan. App. 2d at 343. The underlying assumption of the Commission's decision is that Westar will likely significantly dismantle all or most of its steam generation facilities at the end of their operating life. The Commission then multiplies the effect of this assumption by applying an inflation factor. There is no evidence in the record that comparable utilities dismantle or plan to dismantle most or all of their steam facilities. Likewise, the Commission relied on no evidence that Westar had even tentative plans to significantly dismantle any of its facilities. The cumulative effect of this lack of evidence renders the Commission's order ""so wide of the mark as to be outside the realm of fair debate. [Citations omitted.]"" *Williams Natural Gas Co. v. Kansas Corporation Comm'n*, 22 Kan. App. 2d 326, 335, 916 P.2d 52, rev. denied 260 Kan. 1002 (1996). Based upon a review of the entire record, we conclude the Commission's order permitting Westar to include terminal net salvage depreciation adjusted for inflation for all of its steam generation facilities was not supported by substantial competent evidence and must be reversed.<sup>38</sup>

This is an important decision. It sets forth the need for actual dismantlement plans – not just speculation, it rejects the charging of future inflation to current ratepayers, and it provides minimum intellectual standards upon which to base a decision, even in an area where Commissions generally have wide discretion.

**Company:** Kansas Gas Service  
**Docket No.:** Kansas No. 06-KGSG-1209-RTS  
**SK Witness:** Michael J. Majoros, Jr.  
**Order(s):** Order Granting Joint Motion and Approving Stipulated Settlement Agreement, Issued November 16, 2006

### **Discussion of Results:**

In this case, KGS proposed a \$5.5 million reduction in depreciation expense, based on plant balances as of December 31, 2005. The Company did not separate its proposed depreciation expense accrual into capital recovery and net salvage, however, Mr. Majoros was able to estimate that of the \$35.5 million accrual (based on December 31, 2005 plant), \$9.7 million related to future cost of removal collections.

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<sup>38</sup> Id. (Emphasis added )

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

KGS acknowledged that it had a regulatory liability for cost of removal collections in its 10-K report, but unlike most utilities, it did not quantify that regulatory liability. During discovery, the Company quantified the amount as being \$1.7 million.

Mr. Majoros recommended that the Kansas Corporation Commission (“KCC”) recognize KGS’s non-legal AROs as a regulatory liability for ratemaking purposes in Kansas. He also recommended that instead of including future net salvage ratios in the depreciation rates, the KCC should adopt capital recovery rates coupled with a \$2.4 million normalized net salvage allowance based upon the most recent five years of actual experience.

The settlement included specific details regarding depreciation. According to the Settlement:

Kansas Gas Service will recognize a regulatory liability for tracking the component of the depreciation expense accrual associated with the cost of removal in a unique sub account, separate from the investment and salvage accruals, within the accumulated depreciation reserve. Initially, this amount will be \$1,669,000 as of December 31, 2005. The cost of removal component of Kansas Gas Service's depreciation accrual will be accrued into the cost of removal sub account of the accumulated depreciation reserve monthly and realized cost of removal will be posted to the sub account as incurred.<sup>39</sup>

The parties to the settlement also agreed that the Commission should open a generic docket to review and investigate depreciation policies and practices. The KCC approved the Stipulated Settlement Agreement, with specific mention of the agreements regarding depreciation.

B. Regarding depreciation issues, the Commission finds that the amounts recorded to Account 108 for the costs of removal are to be hereafter treated as a regulatory liability for rate making purposes, as set forth in paragraph 17 of the Settlement Agreement. The Commission further finds that Staff should continue to investigate the need for a generic docket regarding cost of removal depreciation and file an appropriate motion asking that such a generic docket be opened, as discussed in the above Order.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> I/M/O Kansas Gas Service, Stipulated Settlement Agreement, October 25, 2006, p. 5.

<sup>40</sup> I/M/O Kansas Gas Service, Order Granting Joint Motion and Approving Stipulated Settlement Agreement, November 16, 2006, pp. 5-6.

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### Michigan

**Company:** Consumers Energy Company  
**Case No.:** Michigan U-12999  
**SK Witness:** Charles W. King  
**Order(s):** Proposal For Decision, Issued June 28, 2004  
Opinion and Order, Issued October 14, 2004  
Order Initiating Generic Proceeding, Issued October 14, 2004

### Discussion of Results:

In this case, Snaveley King testified on behalf of the Attorney General. Mr. King recommended "basing net salvage factors on the ratios of the most recent five years of actual salvage experience to plant-in-service."<sup>41</sup> The ALJ recommended that the Commission adopt the net salvage ratios and recommended removal cost allowances set forth by Mr. King.

The Commission recognized that net salvage was a major issue in its Opinion and Order:

Consumers would continue the traditional approach to calculating and recovering net salvage; that approach maintains the *status quo* but does not address the singular issue raised by the remaining parties regarding the absolute size of the negative net salvage values proposed by Consumers and the formidable present net-salvage level within the company's books. The Staff's position reduces net-salvage values through the use of a five-year rather than a ten-year average of recent experience, but (as pointed out by Consumers) does so through use of a simplified company-wide average rather than on a functional plant group basis. Such an approach can mask anomalies that may exist within specific classes of gas utility plant. ABATE advocates utilization of a completely revised approach—net-salvage cost would become an expense item separate from depreciation and collected as such in Consumers' rates. The Attorney General would also separate net salvage from depreciation, but would recover that cost through depreciation expense, albeit with a similar current-cost result as ABATE. This "separation" concept has not been adopted

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<sup>41</sup> I/M/O Consumers Energy Company, Case No. U-12999, Proposal For Decision, Issued June 28, 2004, page 15.

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

in Michigan before, although other state commissions have considered it.<sup>42</sup>

However, the Commission was concerned with the magnitude of the net salvage adjustments proposed by the parties, including the AG.

The gulf between the positions of the various parties is approximately \$50 million in the amount of annual depreciation expense that is appropriate for recovery, or approximately one-half of the amount that the Commission has previously found appropriate as a depreciation expense for Consumers. The effect of such a considerable shift in cost recovery on both customer rates and quality of service could similarly be large, and it should not be undertaken lightly. The Commission is persuaded that the abrupt shift in the method and the manner of cost of removal recovery as proposed either by ABATE or the Attorney General is ill-advised at this juncture without further industry-wide comment, discussion, and review. The Commission provides for this in a companion order issued today in Case No. U-14292.<sup>43</sup>

The Commission is equally not persuaded that a shift to a simplified five-year company-wide average as proposed by the Staff should be implemented. However, the Commission is concerned that the large negative net-salvage values that result from Consumers' analysis of ten years of data (or the projected costs for storage wells and related matters) do not provide an accurate illustration of the costs that Consumers will bear to retire its assets in the future. The large variance between Consumers' incurred removal costs and its projected costs has been amply pointed out by the Attorney General and by ABATE. Thus, Consumers' proffered rates will not alleviate this concern of the remaining parties.<sup>44</sup>

The Commission decided that the Company should continue to use its existing depreciation rates for the time being. In addition, the Commission opened a Generic Proceeding to "review Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 143, Federal Regulatory Commission Order No. 631, and their accounting and ratemaking issues (as well as other matters that are related to the retirement of tangible long-lived assets and

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<sup>42</sup> I/M/O Consumers Energy Company, Case No. U-12999, Opinion and Order, Issued October 14, 2004, pages 12-13 (emphasis added)

<sup>43</sup> Id., page 13.

<sup>44</sup> Id.

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

the associated asset retirement costs) for Commission-jurisdictional electric and gas entities.”<sup>45</sup> The results of that proceeding are discussed below.

**Company:** Generic Proceeding  
**Case No.:** Michigan U-14292  
**SK Witness:** Charles W. King  
**Order(s):** Opinion and Order, Issued June 26, 2007

### Discussion of Results:

This case was a generic proceeding opened to “review future treatment of SFAS No. 143-related issues, proper future ratemaking policy regarding those issues, necessary Uniform System of Accounts (USoA) revisions, and other matters that are related to the retirement of tangible long lived assets and the associated retirement costs.”<sup>46</sup> Mr. King testified on behalf of the Attorney General.

In its Order, the Commission noted that the use of TIFCA to estimate future removal costs was no longer suitable:

The Commission agrees with the Staff, the Attorney General, and ABATE that there are apparent problems with the current method for calculating future cost of removal expense as demonstrated by the significant (and increasing) cost of removal depreciation expense accruals for several utilities.<sup>47</sup>

The Commission likewise agrees that the current practice of calculating cost of removal ratios, by comparing removal costs in today’s dollars with the original cost of the plant being retired, is no longer suitable. As the Staff observed, the first problem with this approach is that it assumes that past, generally higher inflation rates will continue into the future. Second, the traditional method fails to take into account the time value of money.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> I/M/O Commission’s Motion to Establish Appropriate Accounting and Ratemaking Treatment for Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 143, Case No. U-14292, Order Initiating Generic Proceeding and Notice of Hearing, Issued October 14, 2004, page 6.

<sup>46</sup> I/M/O Commission’s Motion to Establish Appropriate Accounting and Ratemaking Treatment for Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 143, Case No. U-14292, Opinion and Order, Issued June 26, 2007, page 3.

<sup>47</sup> Id., p. 32.

<sup>48</sup> Id., pp. 32-33.

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

The Commission did not select a replacement methodology for TIFCA, choosing to defer the selection until it had more information:

The Commission therefore directs the large utilities to file new depreciation cases in 2008, using 2007 cost of removal expenses as a basis, and to calculate cost of removal depreciation under: 1) the current method for calculating cost of removal; 2) the current method for calculating cost of removal using the standard retirement units proposed by the Staff; 3) the method proposed by Mr. Czech and using the standard retirement units proposed by the Staff; and 4) an SFAS No. 143 approach that considers the time value of money applied to required AROs and other AROs, with and without the standard retirement units proposed by the Staff. This additional information will allow the Commission to assess the propriety of the different proposals and the efficacy of implementing them for each individual utility.<sup>49</sup>

In its Order, the Commission also "deferred approval of regulatory asset and regulatory liability accounting until after the USoAs for electric and gas utilities were amended."<sup>50</sup>

### Georgia

**Company:** Georgia Power Company  
**Docket No.:** Georgia 4007-U  
**SK Witness:** Charles W. King  
**Order(s):** Order, Issued 1991

#### Discussion of Results:

As described in the Georgia Public Service Commission's April 29, 2002 Proposed Final Order, Atlanta Gas Light Docket No. 14311-U, "In 1991, in Docket No. 4007-U, and again on December 20, 2001 in Docket No. 14000-U, the Commission approved a procedure [recommended by Staff witness Charles W. King] for computing net removal and salvage ratios for the Georgia Power Company that avoids the distorting effect of comparing dollars of very different values. Under this procedure, the utility develops an estimate of the total current cost of removing all existing plant in each account. This estimate is then ratioed to the current investment in the existing plant to derive the net removal cost ratio."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Id., p. 33.

<sup>50</sup> Id., p. 35.

<sup>51</sup> IN RE: Earnings Review to Establish Just and Reasonable Rates for Atlanta Gas Light Company, Georgia Public Service Commission, Docket No. 14311-U, Proposed Final Order of the Public Service Commission's Advocate Staff



## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

**Company:** Georgia Power Company  
**Docket No.:** Georgia 14000-U  
**SK Witness:** Charles W. King  
**Order(s):** Order, Issued December 20, 2001

### Discussion of Results:

As explained above, the Georgia Public Service Commission first adopted Mr. King's recommended depreciation rates for this Company in 1991, Docket No. 4007-U. Mr. King's rates included a provision for net salvage which was calculated by developing an estimate of the total current cost of removing all existing plant in each account and then applying that estimate to the current investment in the existing plant to derive the net removal cost ratio. This methodology is different from the "traditional" methodology used by GA Power and other companies in that it removes the distortion caused by comparing current cost of removal dollars to very old retirement dollars.

In the Company's 2001 rate case, Georgia Power Company filed depreciation rates using that procedure and the Commission again agreed with Mr. King's recommended rates, which included the same net salvage methodology in use since 1991. In this case, the Commission adopted an Alternative Rate Plan, which included the following language:

The Company shall reduce its annual depreciation expenses by \$66.548 million to reflect the depreciation rates recommended by Staff, except that the Company shall utilize a fifty-year life for setting depreciation rates for Plant Vogtle.<sup>52</sup>

**Company:** Georgia Power Company  
**Docket No.:** Georgia 18300-U  
**SK Witness:** Charles W. King  
**Order(s):** Order, Issued December 22, 2004.

As in the previous GA Power Rate cases, Mr. King testified on behalf of the Georgia Public Service Commission's Adversary Staff. Georgia Power once again, used Mr. King's recommended net salvage approach. However, in the 2004 rate case, he also recommended "the complete separation of pure depreciation, that is, the recovery of

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<sup>52</sup> Georgia Power Company's 2001 Rate Case, Docket No. 14000-U, Order, Issued December 20, 2001, Exhibit A, Consent to Alternative Rate Plan.

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capital investment, from the recovery of net removal costs.”<sup>53</sup> Mr. King proposed “separate schedules of rates for these two functions”, using his net salvage recommendations.<sup>54</sup>

Although it is not explicitly stated in the Order, it is Mr. King’s understanding that with the exception of the life span for Plant Vogtle, the Commission adopted his depreciation rate recommendations, including those for net salvage.

**Company:** Atlanta Gas Light Company  
**Docket No.:** Georgia 14311-U  
**SK Witness:** Charles W. King  
**Order(s):** Order, Issued April 29, 2002

### **Discussion of Results:**

In this case, Mr. King recommended the same net salvage methodology for Atlanta Gas Light that had been ordered for, and in use by Georgia Power Company since 1991. The procedure calls for the utility to develop an estimate of the total current cost of removing all existing plant in each account and then ratio that estimate to the current investment in the existing plant to derive the net removal cost ratio. This methodology removes the distorting effect of comparing dollars of very different values from the net salvage ratio.

The Commission agreed with Mr. King’s recommendations:

The Commission further finds that it is reasonable to require the Company to utilize the depreciation rates recommended by the Advocacy Staff witness Mr. King.<sup>55</sup>

**Company:** Atlanta Gas Light Company  
**Docket No.:** Georgia 18638-U  
**SK Witness:** Charles W. King  
**Order(s):** Order, Issued April 27, 2005

In this case, Mr. King, testifying on behalf of the GPSC Adversary Staff, recommended the use of “two sets of rates, one being “pure” depreciation rates that only recover capital previously expended, and the other removal cost rates that accrue funds to

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<sup>53</sup> Georgia Power Company’s 2004 Rate Case, Docket No. 18300-U, Direct Testimony of Charles W. King, page 4

<sup>54</sup> Id.

<sup>55</sup> I/M/O Atlanta Gas Light Company, Docket No. 14311-U, Order, Issued April 29, 2002, page 6.

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remove, dismantle or otherwise dispose of property currently in service.”<sup>56</sup> Additionally, Mr. King recommended “the Commission retain the present system for developing removal cost allowances. That procedure compares an estimate of the lifetime cost of removal, expressed in current dollars, to the original cost of each account that may incur such costs.”<sup>57</sup>

The Commission agreed, stating:

The Commission finds as a matter of fact that the depreciation rates proposed by the Commission’s Adversary Staff are fair, just and reasonable.<sup>58</sup>

Although Commissioner Stan Wise dissented with the Commission’s Order, he agreed with the Order in the area of depreciation rates.<sup>59</sup> On May 9, 2005, Atlanta Gas Light filed a Petition For Rehearing, Reconsideration and Oral Argument. As of May 11, 2005, the Commission had not responded to that petition.

**Company:** Savannah Electric and Power Company  
**Docket No.:** Georgia 19758-U  
**SK Witness:** Charles W. King  
**Order(s):** Order, Issued May 17, 2005 (based on Stipulation)

Mr. King testified on behalf of the Adversary Staff. As with the most recent Atlanta Gas Light case, he recommended “two sets of rates, one being “pure” depreciation rates that only recover capital previously expended, and the other removal cost rates that accrue funds to remove, dismantle or otherwise dispose of property currently in service.”<sup>60</sup> He also recommended that “the Commission apply the procedure for developing removal cost allowances that Savannah Electric uses for its production plant and that the Georgia Power and Atlanta Gas Light Companies use for all plant categories that incur removal costs. That procedure compares an estimate of the lifetime cost of removal, expressed in current dollars, to the original cost of each account that may incur such costs.”<sup>61</sup>

In the Accounting Order Stipulation agreed to in this case, Mr. King’s recommendations were for the most part accepted:

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<sup>56</sup> I/M/O Atlanta Gas Light Company, Docket No. 18638-U, Direct Testimony of Charles W. King, page 4.

<sup>57</sup> Id.

<sup>58</sup> I/M/O Atlanta Gas Light Company, Docket No. 18638-U, Order, Issued April 27, 2005, page 6.

<sup>59</sup> I/M/O Atlanta Gas Light Company, Docket No. 18638-U, Order, Issued April 27, 2005, Dissenting Opinion of Commissioner Stan Wise, page 2.

<sup>60</sup> In Re: Savannah Electric and Power Company 2004 Rate Case, Docket No. 19758-U, Direct Testimony of Charles W. King, page 4.

<sup>61</sup> Id., page 5.

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For the purpose of this decision, Staff recommended depreciation rates shall be used with the exception that the McIntosh Combined Cycle Units service life shall be set at 35 years and the depreciation rate for account 397 (telecommunications equipment) shall be corrected.<sup>62</sup>

The Commission adopted the stipulation in its May 17, 2005 Order.

### **Delaware**

**Company:** Delmarva Power & Light Company  
**Docket No.:** Delaware Docket No. 05-304  
**SK Witness:** Michael J. Majoros, Jr.  
**Order(s):** Findings and Recommendation of the Hearing Examiner, Issued April 14, 2006  
Findings, Opinion and Order No. 6930, Issued June 6, 2006.

### **Discussion of Results:**

Mr. Majoros initially filed testimony recommending that the DPSC specifically recognize the regulatory liability resulting from Delmarva's collection of excessive non-legal ARO charges as a refundable regulatory liability for regulatory reporting, regulatory analysis, and ratemaking purposes in Delaware. He also recommended that the DPSC require separate capital recovery versus cost of removal depreciation rates. Mr. Majoros recommended any of four alternatives for the treatment of future net salvage. These were expensing, the normalized net salvage allowance approach, the net present value approach or the SFAS No. 143 fair value approach. He prepared his calculations using the net present value approach, which discounted all of Delmarva's proposed future cost of removal parameters to their net present value.

At the request of the Commission staff, Mr. Majoros filed supplemental direct testimony recommending that Delmarva's existing regulatory liability for cost of removal collections be amortized back to ratepayers over a period from 5 to 10 years in order to mitigate a significant spike to energy prices. Mr. Majoros recalculated his proposed depreciation rates to reflect the removal of this portion of the depreciation reserve from the rate calculations. His recommendations regarding future net salvage parameters did not change.

The Hearing Examiner did not require the establishment of a regulatory liability for cost of removal. However, he did adopt the normalized net salvage allowance approach for the treatment of future net salvage. This was one of the approaches Mr. Majoros

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<sup>62</sup> Docket 19758-U, Accounting Order Stipulation, page 2.

## Alternatives to TIFCA Approved by Public Service Commissions

recommended, and it is also the approach the Division of the Public Advocate's ("DPA") depreciation witness recommended. As stated by the Hearing Examiner,

139. For purposes of this case, at this time, the five-year rolling average for recovery of cost of removal provides a reasonable and preferred method for addressing this controversial aspect of depreciation, and better conforms with the generally accepted accounting principles articulated in Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 143 (SFAS 143) by not treating non-legal asset retirement obligations (AROs) as if they were legal AROs. (DPA Proposed Findings at 37.) In contrast, Delmarva's method of including estimated future cost of removal in the depreciation rates essentially treats a non-legal ARO as if it were a legal ARO. (Id.)<sup>63</sup>

140. Advantages offered by this approach include that it is simple, straight-forward and easy to implement, and avoids charging current customers for estimated future costs and estimated future inflation. (Id.) In addition, while it marks a departure from past practices, it is strongly endorsed by two credible expert witnesses, and it establishes a sensible and verifiable method to recover such costs. Even if the five-year average proves to be low, it is unlikely that the Company will suffer any shortfall in the short term (judging from the large size of the existing COR reserve, which is still available for retirements) and, in the long term, any necessary increases (or decreases) will occur in future rate cases, just as with any normalized expense. I agree with DPA, therefore, that the cost of removal should be separated from the calculation of depreciation rates and a normalized allowance should be provided for cost of removal expense, using a five-year average. This adjustment to Delaware distribution operations results in a reduction to Delmarva's proposal of \$5,625,282. (Id.; Exh. 41 (Smith) at Exhibit RCS-1, Schedule 1, column K.)<sup>64</sup>

141. I recognize that, on its face, DPA's proposal may appear to conflict with many of the reasons proffered above

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<sup>63</sup> I/M/O Delmarva Power & Light Company, Docket No. 05-304, Findings and Recommendations of the Hearing Examiner, April 14, 2006, p. 71.

<sup>64</sup> Id., pp. 71-72.

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in support of my recommendations regarding protection of the COR reserve, such as its proper classification as a depreciation reserve and the potential for intergenerational inequities if it is compromised. However, the COR reserve, as it now stands, was collected under an approach, approved by the Commission, that estimated future removal costs and recovered such costs in depreciation rates. It is reasonable, therefore, for the Commission to protect those funds already in the depreciation reserve account that are earmarked for future removals. As noted by Delmarva, however, DPA's approach is radically different in that it relies not on estimates of actual future removal costs but on a prediction that future removal costs will approximate the five-year historical average of such costs. (Delmarva PHB at 145.) Under DPA's proposal, removal costs will be separated from depreciation rates, and are viewed and recorded as a recurring operational expense rather than as a capital cost subject to depreciation. Because of this fundamental difference in how such costs will be viewed and recorded, the DPA proposal is not inconsistent with my earlier recommendations, which only relate to protection of, and accounting treatment for, the existing COR reserve.<sup>65</sup>

The Commission agreed with the Hearing Examiner.

174. Discussion and Decision. We adopt the Hearing Examiner's findings and recommendations that a rolling five-year average of actual depreciation expense be used for the removal cost component of depreciation - but, pursuant to the Company's request, we note that we will not be adverse to re-examining this issue in a future base rate case. That having been said, we recognize that using a rolling five-year average of depreciation expense is an approach that is used in only two other states, and represents a departure from our prior method of determining the amount of depreciation expense to be included in rates.<sup>66</sup>

175. We are troubled, however, by the amount of depreciation expense that has been collected over the years and remains in the Company's depreciation reserve (\$105 million on a system-wide basis) and that the Company's proposed rates would collect on an annual basis \$15.9

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<sup>65</sup> Id., pp. 72-73.

<sup>66</sup> I/M/O Delmarva Power & Light Company, Docket No 05-304, Findings, Opinion and Order No. 6930, pp. 87-88.

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million). The record evidence shows, and the Company did not dispute, that its test period depreciation expense was \$6.2 million and that its depreciation expense has averaged \$4 million over the last 5 years. With respect to other expenses that a utility incurs, we use a test period expense level to set the expense level going forward, or we normalize expenses over some period of years if we believe that the test period level is unrepresentative of what can be expected in the future. Here, however, it seems to us that the attempt to estimate what future removal costs will be in the future is nothing more than conjecture.<sup>67</sup>

176. In this regard, we note that the expenses being discussed here are removal costs only. They are not the costs to replace the asset being removed. The replacement costs are placed into rate base when the replacement asset becomes used and useful in providing utility services, and the utility earns a return of, as well as on, that investment. The expenses being discussed here relate solely to the cost of removing an asset that has served out its useful life.<sup>68</sup>

177. For the foregoing reasons, as well as those set forth by the Hearing Examiner, we adopt the Hearing Examiner's findings and recommendations, with the caveat that we will reconsider this issue in the Company's next base rate case should the Company choose to raise it.<sup>69</sup>

### Maryland

**Company:** Washington Gas Light Company  
**Docket No.:** Maryland Case No. 8960  
**SK Witness:** Michael J. Majoros, Jr.  
**Order(s):** Order No. 79193, Issued June 18, 2004

In this case, Mr. Majoros discussed two alternatives to the Company's TIFCA net salvage calculations - the SFAS No. 143 fair value approach and the normalized net salvage allowance approach. He recommended the use of a five-year average net salvage allowance. Washington Gas Light had not calculated and disclosed its regulatory liability for non-legal AROs. Mr. Majoros performed the calculation and discussed the issue.

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<sup>67</sup> Id., p. 88.

<sup>68</sup> Id.

<sup>69</sup> Id., pp. 88-89.

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Although the Commission did not adopt Mr. Majoros's net salvage recommendations, it did acknowledge the need for future review and consideration of the issue in the next proceeding. Significantly, the Commission will examine how actual removal costs compare to the estimates used in the derivation of the depreciation rates.

While we are affirming the Hearing Examiner's decision to continue the straight-line depreciation recovery of removal costs, Staff and OPC have raised questions which warrant consideration in the next depreciation proceeding. In addition to the traditional questions of service life, adequacy of reserve, etc., in the future we will examine how actual removal costs compare to the estimates used in the derivation of the depreciation rates.<sup>70</sup>

**Company:** Potomac Electric Power Company  
**Docket No.:** Maryland Case No. 9092  
**SK Witness:** Charles W. King  
**Order(s):** Order No. 81517, Issued July 19, 2007

Testifying on behalf of the Office of People's Counsel, Mr. King recommended using the rolling five-year average method of collecting removal costs. He also recommended amortizing the existing cost of removal reserve back to ratepayers. The Company had calculated its net salvage ratios using TIFCA and Staff used the Present Value Method.<sup>71</sup>

Although the Commission did not adopt Mr. King's recommendations, it did adopt Staff's Present Value Method of estimating net salvage, stating:

...because future costs are discounted to a "present value," today's ratepayers will pay only their fair share of recovery costs in "real" dollars rather than the inflated amounts under the Straight Line Method. In our opinion, the Present Value Method strikes an appropriate balance between the interests of current and future ratepayers.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> I/M/O Washington Gas Light Company, Case No. 8960, Order No. 79193, Issued June 18, 2004.

<sup>71</sup> I/M/O Potomac Electric Power Company, Case No. 9092, Order No. 81517, Issued July 19, 2007.

<sup>72</sup> Id., p. 31.



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### Arkansas

**Company:** CenterPoint Energy Arkla  
**Docket No.:** Arkansas Docket No. 04-121-U  
**SK Witness:** None  
**Order(s):** Order No. 16, Issued September 19, 2005

In this case, the Company initially proposed to continue using its existing depreciation rates. Due to concerns over the level of negative net salvage that were raised in the case in which those rates adopted, Commission Staff Witness Freier prepared a new depreciation study and recommended new rates. Ms. Freier found that high net negative salvage for the mains and services accounts was the primary factor causing the difference between her proposed rates and the current rates.<sup>73</sup>

Arkla's net salvage ratios had been estimated using TIFCA. Ms. Freier developed her net salvage ratios by restating retirements, gross salvage and cost of removal on a constant price level, to remove the historical inflation inherent in the TIFCA methodology.<sup>74</sup>

The Company submitted a new depreciation study in response to Ms. Freier, and again used TIFCA to estimate future net salvage ratios. However, the Commission adopted Ms. Freier's study:

We are also very concerned about the high level of negative net salvage associated with Arkla's mains and services. This issue arose previously in Arkla Docket No. 01-243-U in which Arkla was directed to perform a removal cost study. ... Ms. Freier's methodology for calculating net salvage on a constant dollar basis represents a departure from the historical procedure we have followed to set Arkla's depreciation rates. However, we note that the net salvage allowances recommended by Ms. Freier of -70 percent for Mains and - 115 percent for Services are still significant and are in line with experience elsewhere as cited by Mr. Spanos. Moreover, the use of remaining life depreciation will ensure that Arkla will fully recover its original investment and the actual amount it incurs for negative net salvage. Accordingly, we adopt Staffs proposed net salvage values and, in turn, Staffs depreciation rates as a means of capping net salvage cost.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> I/M/O CenterPoint Energy Arkla, Docket No. 04-121-U, Order No. 16, Issued September 19, 2005, p. 25.

<sup>74</sup> *Id.*, p. 26.

<sup>75</sup> *Id.*, p. 29.

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CenterPoint Arkla is currently involved in a new rate case, Docket No. 06-161-U. Both parties (the Company and Staff) are standing by their positions in Docket No. 04-121-U, and as of September, 2007, an Order has not been issued.