

January 8, 2009

Dave Armstrong, Chairman
Public Service Commission
P.O.Box 615
Frankfort, KY 40602

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RE: Proposed LG&E Rate Increase

PUBLIC SERVICE
COMMISSION

Dear Chairman Armstrong:

I do hope you will do me the courtesy of hearing me out regarding the proposed LG&E rate increase. It is also my hope that something I can offer, might make a difference in your and the Commission's decision making. Thank you for your time.

My costs of living have increased, in the last year, approximately \$2400. Those costs are for utilities, health insurance, cable rates, groceries, gasoline, property taxes, home owner and vehicle insurances. I live on a fixed income, am widowed, had to take early SS and retirement. My SS increase will provide me little more than \$1100 additional this year. That leaves me a shortfall of nearly \$1300 for 2009, -IF- nothing else increases.

You see, I have no 'PSC' to fight for my income shortfall!! Every time I turn around, someone is telling me I'm going to have to pay more for water, gas&electric, gasoline, food, car/home/health insurance. What choices am I given?: refuse to pay? Move out of my home? Give it all away and join a convent? Die?

I feel I have done nearly all that has been asked of me, as a customer and a consumer. I participate in the EMPP and Demand Conservation. We added extra insulation several years ago. I have used CFL's for years, keep the curtains closed (except on sunny days -of which there are not enough during winter months!), do laundry in cold water, don't use the dishwasher every day, turn lights off in unused rooms, block off unused rooms. I replaced my water heater with a more energy efficient one and set the temp lower. I also use 'draft dodgers' on the doors and all windowsills. I've covered some windows with plastic. I use wool blankets, heavy quilts, flannel sheets on the beds and wear many layers of clothing around the house. The thermostat is turned to 62 degrees at night; 66 degrees during the day. BUT, I still freeze to death (figuratively speaking) in my home. My 'home' is dark and closed up from late November to May! It's horrible! It's depressing! Sometimes I have to ask myself, is this 2009 or 1910??? (I looked into replacement windows, but I don't have the \$15-\$20,000 to do that. None of the four companies I talked with promised I would ever recoup that in energy savings. My home is nearly 90 years old, and I'm not sure

replacement windows would be a smart move. It's not so-much the windows themselves, but the installation processes that give me concern.)

I am afraid to turn up the thermostat to a more comfortable level, because I know I can't afford to.

I live with the fear that I will not be able to afford to continue living -even frugally- in this place that has been our home for nearly 30 years. That fear is compounded by unreasonable and frequent utility increases. As a family, we always worked out ways to cut back when times got tough. We took a serious look at our budget and expenses, cut out the frivolous, kept the very basics, made do, did without, and we hunkered down. *There is little blood left in this turnip!*

So, Mr. Armstrong: It is not unreasonable for me to ask the same of LG&E!

- (1) Is this rate increase REALLY necessary?
- (2) Can LG&E cut back the frivolous? (I'm sure if they took a good, honest hard look, they would find some.)
- (3) Are there ways LG&E can make-do?
- (4) Can LG&E look deep into their hearts, and do the decent thing? (Is it really necessary to add another economic 'nail' in the coffin of the financially hard-strapped consumer, now?)

Like many of us, LG&E needs to hunker down (some more), brainstorm (some more), and honestly look at how they can move us and them into the future without cutting off the hands that feed them? I'm not sure they have exhausted all available avenues. Rate increases are too easy, too temporary a solution, until their next shortfall. The hard work is in frugality, as well as, immediate and long range-cost efficient planning that doesn't create jeopardy for their customers.

It's not just this LG&E increase. It's this one, this time, and the frequency of ALL the others. Utility customers need real, practical and efficient help, not repeated rate increases. That's not help. That's not progress. That's increasing hardship. That's demanding more from people who have little or nothing more to give.

So, as you can see, **I OPPOSE** this proposed rate increase for LG&E. I pray that better and wiser solutions can be decided upon now and for the future.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my comments.

B.A. Barry
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