

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

APPLICATION OF KENTUCKY UTILITIES	)	
COMPANY FOR AN ADJUSTMENT OF ITS	)	
ELECTRIC RATES AND FOR	)	CASE NO. 2016-00370
CERTIFICATES OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE	)	
AND NECESSITY	)	

PETITION OF KENTUCKY UTILITIES COMPANY  
FOR CONFIDENTIAL PROTECTION

Kentucky Utilities Company (“KU” or the “Company”) hereby petitions the Kentucky Public Service Commission (“Commission”) pursuant to 807 KAR 5:001, Section 13 and KRS 61.878(1) to grant confidential protection for the items described herein, which KU seeks to provide in response to Item 4-1 of the Commission’s Fourth Request for Information. In support of this Petition, KU states as follows:

Confidential Personal Information (KRS 61.878(1)(a))

1. Commission Item 4-1 requests information about individual employee salaries and benefits. The Kentucky Open Records Act exempts from disclosure certain private and personal information.<sup>1</sup> The Kentucky Court of Appeals has stated, “information such as . . . wage rate . . . [is] generally accepted by society as [a] detail in which an individual has at least some expectation of privacy.”<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the Kentucky Supreme Court has characterized “one’s income” as “intimate” information of a private nature.<sup>3</sup> The Commission should therefore give confidential treatment to a portion of the information in KU’s response to Commission Item 4-1 because disclosing the contents thereof would invade the privacy rights of certain individuals. Specifically, KU seeks confidential protection for the amount of the salary, other

<sup>1</sup> KRS 61.878(1)(a).

<sup>2</sup> *Zink v. Department of Workers’ Claims, Labor Cabinet*, 902 S.W.2d 825, 828 (Ky. App. 1994).

<sup>3</sup> *Cape Pub’ns, Inc. v. Univ. of Louisville Found., Inc.*, 260 S.W.3d 818, 822 (Ky. 2008).

compensation and benefits not otherwise publicly disclosed. With a very limited exception, KU does not otherwise publicly report these individuals' compensation, making that information personal and private information that should not be in the public realm.<sup>4</sup> The limited exception is a portion of the salary of the top five executives that is allocated to KU and is publicly disclosed in the annual FERC Form 1 Report. But that amount, plus the amount reported in the Louisville Gas and Electric Company ("LG&E") FERC Form 1 Report, does not equal the total amount of salary for the top five executives. Thus, with the exception of the chief executive officer, the remaining top five executives' total salaries are not publicly disclosed, and their other compensation is not publicly disclosed. Additionally, none of the salaries or other compensation of the remaining officers of KU are publicly disclosed. These KU employees, therefore, have a reasonable expectation that their compensation is personal and private information. Disclosure would constitute an unwarranted invasion of their personal privacy in contravention of KRS 61.878(1)(a).

Providing the requested confidential protection for the compensation information of KU's employees would fully accord with the purpose of the Act, which is to make government and its actions open to public scrutiny. Concerning the rationale for the Act, the Kentucky Court of Appeals has stated:

[T]he public's "right to know" under the Open Records Act is premised upon the public's right to expect its agencies properly to execute their statutory functions. In general, inspection of records may reveal whether the public servants are indeed serving the public, and the policy of disclosure provides impetus for an agency steadfastly to pursue the public good. At its most basic level, the purpose of disclosure focuses on the citizens' right to be informed as to what their government is doing.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Only the chief executive officer's complete salary and other compensation is publicly disclosed each year in filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission; KU is not requesting protection from public disclosure of that information.

<sup>5</sup> *Zink*, 902 S.W.2d at 828-29.

Citing the Court of Appeals, the Kentucky Office of the Attorney General (“AG”) stated in an Open Records Decision (“ORD”), “If disclosure of the requested record would not advance the underlying purpose of the Open Records Act, namely exposing agency action to public scrutiny, then countervailing interests, such as privacy, must prevail.”<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, in an order approving LG&E’s petition for confidential treatment in Case No. 89-374, the Commission stated that salary information “should be available for customers to determine whether those salaries are reasonable,” but “the right of each individual employee within a job classification to protect such information as private outweighs the public interest in the information.”<sup>7</sup> In the same order, the Commission concluded, “Thus, the salary paid to each individual within a classification is entitled to protection from public disclosure.”<sup>8</sup> The Commission had reached the same conclusion in two previous orders in the same case.<sup>9</sup>

The compensation information for which KU seeks confidential protection in this case is comparable to that provided to the Commission by KU in the past. The Commission granted confidential protection of the compensation paid to certain professional employees in a letter from the Executive Director of the Commission dated December 1, 2003, in *In the Matter of: An Investigation Pursuant to KRS 278.260 of the Earnings Sharing Mechanism Tariff of Louisville*

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<sup>6</sup> *In re: James L. Thomerson/Fayette County Schools*, KY OAG 96-ORD-232 (Nov. 1, 1996) (citing *Zink v. Department of Workers’ Claims, Labor Cabinet*, 902 S.W.2d 825 (Ky. App. 1994)) (emphasis added).

<sup>7</sup> *In the Matter of: Application of Louisville Gas and Electric Company for an Order Approving an Agreement and Plan of Exchange and to Carry Out Certain Transactions in Connection Therewith*, Case No. 89-374, Order at 2 (Ky. PSC Apr. 30, 1997).

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> See *In the Matter of: Application of Louisville Gas and Electric Company for an Order Approving an Agreement and Plan of Exchange and to Carry Out Certain Transactions in Connection Therewith*, Case No. 89-374, Order at 2 (Ky. PSC Apr. 4, 1996); *In the Matter of: Application of Louisville Gas and Electric Company for an Order Approving an Agreement and Plan of Exchange and to Carry Out Certain Transactions in Connection Therewith*, Case No. 89-374, Order at 2 (Ky. PSC Apr. 8, 1994). See also *In the Matter of: Application of BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc. d/b/a South Central Bell Telephone Company to Modify its Method of Regulation*, Case No. 94-121, Order at 4-5 (Ky. PSC July 20, 1995) (“Salaries and wages are matters of private interest which individuals have a right to protect unless the public has an overriding interest in the information. The information furnished, however, only shows the salary range for three labor classifications and does not provide the identity of persons who receive those salaries. Therefore, disclosure of the information would not be an invasion of any employee’s personal privacy, and the information is not entitled to protection.”).

*Gas and Electric Company*, Case No. 2003-00335. However, the Commission's Executive Director has also denied such requests in the past.<sup>10</sup>

The Commission also has previously denied confidential protection to executive officer information and held that because executive officer "salaries are included as an expense in base rate calculations" and are "subject to public dissemination of regulatory filings," the information should not be entitled to confidential protection.<sup>11</sup> KU respectfully disagrees because neither of these reasons justify denying confidential protection to executive officer information in this case. First, as the record demonstrates, only a portion of the officers' salary and other compensation is included in the cost of providing service to customers, and the average salary and other compensation is publicly disclosed on the filing schedule.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, KU customers may gauge the reasonableness of compensation through publicly disclosed information that is already available.

Next, the fact that salaries of certain officers are publicly disseminated in regulatory filings also does not justify the refusal to grant confidential protection. In 2010, KU began disclosing in the public record as part of its FERC Form 1 Reports the salary amounts allocated

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<sup>10</sup> See, e.g., *In the Matter of Application of Kentucky Utilities Company for an Adjustment of Base Rates*, Case No. 2008-00251, Letter from Executive Director Stumbo (Ky. PSC Sept. 2, 2008); *In the Matter of Application of Louisville Gas and Electric Company for an Adjustment of Its Electric and Gas Base Rates*, Case No. 2008-00252, Letter from Executive Director Stumbo (Ky. PSC Sept. 2, 2008).

<sup>11</sup> *In the Matter of: Application of Kentucky Utilities Company for an Adjustment of its Electric Rates*, Case No. 2012-00222, Order Regarding Request for Confidential Treatment at 2 (Ky. PSC Sept. 11, 2013). See also *In the Matter of: Application of Kentucky-American Water Company for an Adjustment of Rates*, Case No. 2015-00418, Order at 2 (Ky. PSC Aug. 31, 2016) (finding "that KAWC's executive salaries are an expense in the rate base calculations" and holding that "such salary compensation is not entitled to confidential protection"); *In the Matter of: Application of Kentucky Utilities Company for an Adjustment of its Electric Rates*, Case No. 2014-00371, Order Regarding Request for Confidential Treatment at 1-2 (Ky. PSC Jan. 20, 2016) (denying confidential protection for executive salary information for the same reasons as Case No. 2012-00222 and noting that "[m]ovant has not offered any argument to depart from this precedent"); *In the Matter of: An Adjustment of Gas and Electric Rates of Louisville Gas and Electric Company*, Case No. 90-158, Order (Ky. PSC Sept. 7, 1990) ("Since LG&E seeks to recover through its rate structure the compensation in salaries paid to its executive employees, LG&E customers have a right to know whether the salaries and compensation paid to such employees are reasonable.").

<sup>12</sup> KU Application, Tab No. 60, Attachment to Tab 60 Officer Compensation, Case No. 2016-00370.

to KU, but not any other compensation information, for its top-five officers only.<sup>13</sup> In 2010, KU disclosed in filings with the Securities Exchange Commission details regarding executive benefits of its top-five officers. In subsequent years, KU disclosed details regarding only its top chief executive officer and not its next four executive officers. Because KU requests confidential protection only for the executive benefits not otherwise publicly disclosed, granting confidential protection to this limited information accords with KRS 61.878(1)(a) and Commission precedent regarding salaries disclosed in regulatory filings.

### **The Confidential Information Subject to this Petition**

2. The information for which KU is seeking confidential treatment is not known outside of the Company, and is not disseminated within KU except to those employees with a legitimate business need to know the information.

3. KU will disclose the confidential information, pursuant to a confidentiality agreement, to intervenors with a legitimate interest in this information and as required by the Commission.

4. If the Commission disagrees with this request for confidential protection, however, it must hold an evidentiary hearing (a) to protect KU's due process rights and (b) to supply the Commission with a complete record to enable it to reach a decision with regard to this matter.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> LG&E's FERC Form 1 for the year ending December 31, 2015, available at <http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/common/opennat.asp?fileID=14178739>, provided the salary amounts allocated to LG&E for the following officers: Victor A. Staffieri (Chairman of the Board, President, and Chief Executive Officer); Gerald A. Reynolds (General Counsel, Chief Compliance Officer, and Corporate Secretary); Kent W. Blake (Chief Financial Officer); Paul W. Thompson (Chief Operating Officer); Paula H. Pottinger (Senior Vice-President-Human Resources) and former officer S. Bradford Rives (Chief Administrative Officer).

<sup>14</sup> *Utility Regulatory Commission v. Kentucky Water Service Company, Inc.*, 642 S.W.2d 591, 592-94 (Ky. App. 1982).

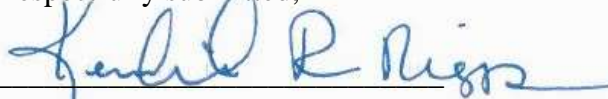
5. In compliance with 807 KAR 5:001, Sections 8(3) and 13(2)(e), KU is filing with the Commission the confidential information in the requested Excel format and seeks protection of the entirety of the Excel files.

6. KU requests that confidential protection be granted for five years due to the sensitive nature of the information at issue.

7. **WHEREFORE**, Kentucky Utilities Company respectfully requests that the Commission grant confidential protection for the information described herein.

Dated: April 13, 2017

Respectfully submitted,



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**CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE**

This is to certify that Kentucky Utilities Company's April 13, 2017 electronic filing of the Petition for Confidential Protection is a true and accurate copy of the same document being filed in paper medium; that the electronic filing has been transmitted to the Commission on April 13, 2017; that there are currently no parties that the Commission has excused from participation by electronic means in this proceeding; and that an unobscured copy of the material for which confidentiality is sought sealed in an opaque envelope is being sent to the Commission on April 14, 2017.



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