

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

ELECTRONIC EMERGENCY DOCKET RELATED)	CASE NO.
TO THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS COVID-19)	2020-00085

ORDER

On March 16, 2020, the Commission established this docket in response to a state of emergency brought on by the pandemic of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. The Commission’s Order entered on March 16, 2020, *inter alia*, directed utilities to temporarily cease disconnections for nonpayment, waive all late payment charges, and urged utilities to offer lenient payment plans for current unpaid balances.¹ On September 21, 2020, the Commission issued an Order that, *inter alia*, lifted the moratorium on residential disconnections for nonpayment as of October 20, 2020, and provided for payment plans of no less than six months to allow for customers to pay off arrearages accumulated since March 16, 2020.²

On December 28, 2020, Columbia Gas of Kentucky, Inc. (Columbia Kentucky) filed a motion requesting deviation from portions of the September 21, 2020 Order that require that a customer be placed in payment plan. As grounds for its motion, Columbia Kentucky states that it had notified its customers with arrearages that the customers would be placed on a default nine-month payment plan beginning with the November 2020 billing

¹ Order at 3–5 (Ky. PSC Mar. 16, 2020).

² Order at 6-7 (Ky. PSC Sept. 21, 2020).

cycle, however, by placing customers on a default payment plan, certain qualifying customers may not be able to be enrolled in Columbia Kentucky's Energy Assistance Program. According to Columbia Kentucky, Community Action Kentucky has identified 1,158 customers eligible for the 1,210 available enrollment slots, that those customers must be processed for enrollment in Columbia Kentucky's billing system, and that the accounts must be processed by December 29, 2020, in order to be enrolled in the Energy Assistance Program, which begins on December 30, 2020.

Columbia Kentucky states that it attempted a test run for enrollment on December 21, 2020, which resulted in the rejection of 427 of the applicants. Columbia Kentucky determined that the rejections occurred because the customers had been placed on default payment plans and Columbia Kentucky's billing system does not allow a customer to be enrolled simultaneously in the Budget Payment Plan and the Energy Assistance Program.

Columbia Kentucky believes that it needs Commission approval to remove from default payment plans those customers whose applications have been rejected so that Columbia Kentucky's billing system will allow those customers to enroll in the Energy Assistance Program. Columbia Kentucky states that in April 2021, after the Energy Assistance Program ends, Columbia Kentucky will review each customer who had been removed from the payment plan and work with the customer to establish a new payment plan, if necessary.

The Commission finds that Columbia Kentucky's motion for deviation should be granted, with one condition: Columbia Kentucky, upon the expiration of the Energy Assistance Program, should report to the Commission the number of customers that were

enrolled in the Energy Assistance Program that still have arrearages and the average amount of the arrearages.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that:

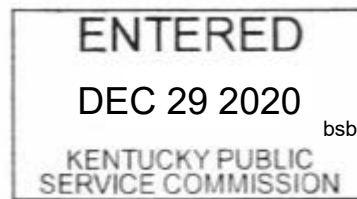
1. Columbia Kentucky's motion for a deviation from the September 21, 2020 Order is granted;

2. Columbia Kentucky, upon the expiration of the Energy Assistance Program, shall report to the Commission the number of customers that were enrolled in the Energy Assistance Program that still have arrearages, and the average amount of the arrearages.

3. The Commission retains the right to modify, alter, or retract any and all portions of this Order, or any Order in this proceeding, at any time.

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By the Commission



ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Linda C. Lindwell". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Executive Director

Case No. 2020-00085

*Columbia Gas of Kentucky, Inc.
Columbia Gas of Kentucky, Inc.
290 W Nationwide Blvd
Columbus, OH 43215