



**NORTH CAROLINA
PUBLIC STAFF
UTILITIES COMMISSION**

September 23, 2021

Ms. A. Shonta Dunston, Chief Clerk
North Carolina Utilities Commission
4325 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4300

Re: Docket No. G-5, Sub 632 – Application of Public Service Company of North Carolina, Inc., for a General Increase in Rates and Charges; and G-5, Sub 634 - Application for Approval to Modify Existing Conservation Programs and Implement New Conservation Programs

Dear Ms. Dunston:

Attached for filing in the above-referenced docket is the testimony and exhibit(s) of Neha R. Patel, Manager, Natural Gas Section, Energy Division. The testimony and exhibits are being refiled to include divider sheets between exhibits.

By copy of this letter, I am forwarding a copy to all parties of record by electronic delivery.

Sincerely,

Electronically submitted
s/ Gina C. Holt
Staff Attorney
gina.holt@psncuc.nc.gov

s/ John Little
Staff Attorney
john.little@psncuc.nc.gov

Attachment

Executive Director
(919) 733-2435

Accounting
(919) 733-4279

Consumer Services
(919) 733-9277

Economic Research
(919) 733-2267

Energy
(919) 733-2267

Legal
(919) 733-6110

Transportation
(919) 733-7766

Water/Telephone
(919) 733-5610

BEFORE THE NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

DOCKET NO. G-5, SUB 632

DOCKET NO. G-5, SUB 632)	
)	
In the Matter of)	
Application of Public Service Company)	
of North Carolina, Inc., for an)	
Adjustment of Natural Gas Rates and)	
Charges in North Carolina)	TESTIMONY OF
)	NEHA PATEL
)	PUBLIC STAFF – NORTH
DOCKET NO. G-5, SUB 634)	CAROLINA UTILITIES
)	COMMISSION
)	
In the Matter of)	
)	
Application for Approval to Modify)	
Existing Conservation Programs and)	
Implement New Conservation)	
Programs)	

BEFORE THE NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

DOCKET NO. G-5, SUB 632

DOCKET NO. G-5, SUB 634

TESTIMONY OF NEHA PATEL

**ON BEHALF OF THE PUBLIC STAFF
NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION**

SEPTEMBER 23, 2021

1 **Q. PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME, BUSINESS ADDRESS, AND**
2 **PRESENT POSITION.**

3 A. My name is Neha Patel. My business address is 430 North Salisbury
4 Street, Dobbs Building, Raleigh, North Carolina. I am the Manager
5 of the Natural Gas Section of the Energy Division of the Public Staff
6 – North Carolina Utilities Commission (Public Staff).

7 **Q. BRIEFLY STATE YOUR QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES.**

8 A. My qualifications and duties are included in Appendix A.

9 **Q. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TESTIMONY?**

10 A. The purpose of my testimony is to present the results of my
11 investigation into the application of Public Service Company of North
12 Carolina, Inc. (PSNC or the Company), for a general rate increase in
13 this proceeding.

1 **Q. WHAT WERE YOUR AREAS OF INVESTIGATIVE**
2 **RESPONSIBILITY IN THIS CASE?**

3 A. My areas of investigation in this case were: (1) determining the
4 appropriate sales and transportation volumes and customer levels,
5 (2) evaluating the proposed weather normalization adjustment for the
6 test period, (3) calculating the customer growth factors, (4)
7 calculating the appropriate end-of-period level of revenues, (5) fixed
8 gas costs and lost and unaccounted for (LUAF) adjustments, (6)
9 calculating the appropriate level of other operating revenues, (7)
10 calculating the updated computational factors used in the Customer
11 Utilization Tracker (CUT) mechanism, (8) general capital additions to
12 plant, (9) reviewing proposed revisions to the Company's tariff, which
13 consists of its various rate schedules and service regulations, (10)
14 evaluating PSNC's request to continue its Commission-approved
15 Integrity Management Tracker (IMT) mechanism, (11) evaluating
16 PSNC's programs to defer operating and maintenance (O&M)
17 expenditures under both its Transmission Integrity Management
18 Program (TIMP) and Distribution Integrity Management Program
19 (DIMP), (12) Evaluating PSNC's proposed GREENTHERM™
20 program, (13) evaluating the Company's Research and
21 Development proposal, and (14) evaluating PSNC's service quality.

1 **WEATHER NORMALIZATION AND CUSTOMER GROWTH**

2 **Q. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF ADJUSTING FOR WEATHER**
3 **NORMALIZATION AND CUSTOMER GROWTH?**

4 A. Weather normalization attempts to analyze and adjust for the impact
5 of actual weather conditions over a specified time period (generally,
6 a test year) on energy consumption relative to expected “normal”
7 weather conditions (as measured over some longer historical period
8 of time).

9 The customer growth adjustment adjusts test period revenues by an
10 amount that represents the growth in sales due to the change in the
11 number of customers.

12 The Public Staff runs its own weather normalization and customer
13 growth models and compares the results to those included in the
14 Company’s general rate case filing.

15 The Public Staff’s linear regression model that computes the
16 baseload (minimum usage level) and a Heat-Sensitive Factor (HSF)
17 is similar to that of the Company. Using this linear regression model,
18 the Public Staff obtained results similar to that of the Company for
19 comparable customer class usage for the heat sensitive customers.

1 **Q. PLEASE EXPLAIN HEATING DEGREE DAYS (HDDs) AND HOW**
2 **THEY ARE UTILIZED IN YOUR LINEAR REGRESSION.**

3 A. HDD is a measurement that quantifies the demand for energy
4 needed for space heating. HDDs are calculated by subtracting the
5 average daily temperature from a standard temperature of 65
6 degrees Fahrenheit.¹ For example, a low of 20 degrees and a high
7 of 40 degrees would yield an average of 30 degrees and an HDD of
8 35 degrees ($65 - ((20 + 40)/2)$). The normal HDDs are determined
9 based on a 30-year historical average.

10 To determine customer usage under normal weather conditions, the
11 Public Staff completed a linear regression to compare the actual
12 customer usage to the actual HDDs to derive the baseload and the
13 heat sensitive factors for the test year period. My completed analysis
14 results in similar regression results to that of the Company.

15 **Q. PLEASE DISCUSS THE PUBLIC STAFF'S GROWTH**
16 **ADJUSTMENTS TO CUSTOMER BILLS AND CONSUMPTION.**

17 A. The Public Staff compares actual changes in the number of monthly
18 customer bills between the test year and the year immediately prior.
19 This comparison produces the average growth rate that the Public

¹ The use of 65 degrees Fahrenheit is based on an assumption that heating is not needed when the outside temperature is 65 degrees or more.

1 Staff applies to each rate class. Due the COVID-19 pandemic and
2 the Commission's moratorium on disconnections for non-payment in
3 effect during the test year, the Company did not disconnect service
4 for non-payment of bills for a majority of the test period. As a result,
5 the test period reflects a higher number of customer bills as
6 compared to prior years. However, in consideration of the anticipated
7 expiration of the disconnection moratorium, and with new customers
8 being added to the system, the Public Staff applied a growth rate to
9 the Residential and the High Efficiency Residential Service customer
10 classes using the same methodology as the Company in applying
11 the actual growth factors from customers billed from 2018 through
12 2019 (when there was no disconnection moratorium in place) to the
13 above customer classes, as well as, making adjustments to certain
14 large-volume customers with known and available information.

15 **Q. WHAT TOTAL SALES AND TRANSPORTATION CUSTOMER**
16 **BILLS AND VOLUME DID YOU USE TO CALCULATE END-OF-**
17 **PERIOD REVENUES?**

18 A. Based on my analysis, I determined that the appropriate level of end-
19 of-period sales and transportation customer bills is 7,388,094 and
20 total sales and transportation volume is 1,318,864,912 therms (ths),
21 as shown in Patel Exhibit I.

1 Q. PLEASE PROVIDE AN EXPLANATION FOR YOUR
2 ADJUSTMENTS SHOWN IN PATEL EXHIBIT I.

3 A. Patel Exhibit I, Columns (4) and (5) show the per books number of
4 bills and the per books sales and transportation volumes segmented
5 by rate schedule for the test year ended December 31, 2020.
6 Weather normalized volumes, shown in Column (6), adjusts the
7 volumes for the heat-sensitive customers (Rate Schedules 101, 102,
8 125, 127 and 140). The Public Staff and the Company agree on the
9 weather normalization calculation methodology, although my
10 adjustments differ slightly from that of the Company's pro forma bills
11 and usage (ths) due to rounding.

12 **END-OF-PERIOD REVENUE CALCULATIONS**

13 Q. WHAT RATES DID YOU USE TO CALCULATE THE END-OF-
14 PERIOD PRO FORMA REVENUE LEVEL?

15 A. To calculate the end-of-period pro forma revenue level, I used the
16 rates approved by the Commission in Docket No. G-5, Sub 633² and
17 the Company's updated IMT rates as approved by the Commission
18 in Docket No. G-5, Sub 636³. These rates exclude any temporary

²Application for Bi-Annual Adjustment of Rates Under Rider C to its Tariff, Order Approving Rate Adjustments Effective April 1, 2020 (March 30, 2021).

³ Application of Public Service Company of North Carolina, Inc. for Bi-Annual Adjustment of Rates Under Rider E to its Tariff, Order Approving Rate Adjustments Effective September 1, 2020 (August 31, 2020).

1 increments or decrements (temporaries) that were included in rates
2 at that point in time. This calculation produces what is known as
3 “clean rates.”

4 **Q. WHY ARE TEMPORARIES REMOVED FROM RATES FOR RATE**
5 **CASE ANALYSIS?**

6 A. Temporaries are usually associated with deferred account activities
7 and are not related to revenue generation for the Company. The
8 margins associated with various rate schedules are typically not
9 affected by temporaries, except when the temporaries are
10 associated with fixed gas costs. Temporaries are removed when
11 calculating end-of-period rates and proposed rates to achieve
12 consistency and for ease of understanding. After the Commission
13 determines the proper rates in this case, the new billing rates will be
14 adjusted for the temporaries currently in effect.

15 **Q. WHAT IS YOUR END-OF-PERIOD REVENUE CALCULATION**
16 **FOR THE COMPANY?**

17 A. The Company is proposing total end-of-period revenues of
18 \$574,112,825, which is comprised of sales and transportation of gas
19 revenues of \$573,392,181 and other operating revenues of
20 \$720,644. I have calculated end-of-period revenues as shown in
21 Patel Exhibit II and I have used a three-year average to determine
22 the appropriate level of other operating revenues.

3 A. The product of the number of customer bills and facilities charge for
4 each rate schedule is the facility charge revenue. Likewise, the
5 volume for each rate schedule was multiplied by the end-of-period
6 rates to arrive at the total energy revenues. The sum of the revenues
7 for the total facilities charge for a particular rate schedule, the energy
8 revenue for that rate schedule, corresponding IMT revenues for that
9 rate schedule and any CUT adjustments equals the total end-of-
10 period revenue level as shown on Patel Exhibit II.

12 Q. DO YOU AGREE WITH THE COMPANY'S ADJUSTMENT TO
13 FIXED GAS COSTS?

21 CUT MECHANISM

1 **Q. PLEASE EXPLAIN ANY ADJUSTMENTS REGARDING THE MDT**
2 **MECHANISM.**

3 A. In this proceeding, the Company filed CUT adjustments to the
4 Residential, High Efficiency Residential Service, Small General
5 Service, High Efficiency Small General Service, and Medium
6 General Service rate schedules. I calculated the normalized usage
7 for heat sensitive customers on a monthly basis and determined the
8 “R” factors. This calculation results in an adjustment in an increase
9 to the Residential, High Efficiency Residential, and Medium General
10 Service total pro forma revenues and a decrease to the Small
11 General and High Efficiency Small General Service pro forma
12 revenues. My results are similar to that of the Company but the
13 Public Staff’s CUT revenue adjustments differ slightly due to
14 rounding.

15 **GENERAL CAPITAL ADDITIONS TO PLANT IN SERVICE**

16 **Q. WHAT WERE YOUR AREAS OF INVESTIGATIVE**
17 **RESPONSIBILITY IN THIS CASE?**

18 A. While I participated in and contributed to a number of areas of the
19 Public Staff’s investigation, I specifically reviewed or supervised the
20 review of the following areas:

- 1 • Multiple transmission pipeline projects, notably the T-1 and
- 2 T-30 transmission projects
- 3 • General capital spend
- 4 • Company vehicles
- 5 • Materials and supplies

6 **CHANGES TO PSNC'S TARIFF**

7 **Q. WHAT CHANGES IS PSNC PROPOSING TO ITS NORTH**

8 **CAROLINA TARIFF?**

9 A. As mentioned by Company witness Hinson, many of the proposed

10 changes are administrative in nature for the sole purpose of making

11 the language more comprehensible.

12 • Following the 2019 SCANA merger with Dominion Energy

13 Inc., the Company proposes to refer to itself as 'Company'

14 throughout the tariff instead of 'PSNC' in an attempt to avoid

15 any confusion.

16 • To eliminate any probable confusion between the

17 Commission's Rules and Regulations and the Company's

18 'Rules and Regulations', it has elected to replace it with,

19 'Service Regulations.'

- 1 • The Company's Service Regulations will now render
2 definitions for, 'Emergency Service', 'Unauthorized Gas',
3 'Service Regulations' and 'Tariff'. 'Standard Service' being an
4 undefined term in the prior Service Regulations when defining
5 'Excess Facilities' has been removed and the proposed
6 revision clarifies that the facilities are to provide service at a
7 pressure higher than that as specified in the tariff using a farm
8 tap.
- 9 • The Company is also proposing similar administrative
10 changes to Appendix A (form for Transportation Pooling
11 Agreement) and Appendix B (Gas Quality standards for
12 Renewable Gas).
- 13 • Witness Hinson has proposed changes to update the Special
14 Contract Credit amounts, margin percentages by rate class,
15 allocation factors, and the annual billing determinants, etc., for
16 the IMT mechanism in Rider E as is necessary with each new
17 general rate case proceeding. Public Staff witness Perry
18 refers to these items in her testimony.

1 **IMT MECHANISM**

2 **Q. PLEASE PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL GAS**
3 **PIPELINE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS.**

4 A. As discussed by Company witness Randall⁴, pipeline operators are
5 required to perform integrity measures on their transmission and
6 distribution pipelines by following the regulatory requirements
7 imposed by the U.S. Department of Transportation Pipeline and
8 Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) under its TIMP
9 and DIMP.

10 The TIMP and DIMP activities are cyclical, are based on timing and
11 intervals of prior assessments, and vary from year to year.

12 Effective July 1, 2020, PHMSA required all pipeline operators to
13 comply with the new Gas Transmission “Mega Rule,”⁵ which
14 provides an expansion of the Integrity Management (IM)
15 requirements for gas transmission pipelines and aims to further
16 increase the level of safety associated with gas transmission
17 pipelines. A significant portion of this rule outlines documentation
18 requiring operators to: (1) Verify pipeline material properties and
19 attributes: Operators must have information on the material strength

⁴ Direct Testimony of Company witness Randall at 4.

⁵ PHMSA - Pipeline Safety: Safety of Gas Transmission Pipelines

1 properties for all transmission pipe; (2) Reconfirm Maximum
2 Allowable Operating Pressure (MAOP): This applies to those
3 transmission pipelines where pressure test records are not
4 traceable, verifiable and complete (TVC); and (3) Expand IM
5 requirements outside HCAs: Periodic assessments of pipelines in
6 populated areas not designated as HCAs to Moderate Consequence
7 Areas (MCAs).⁶

8 **Q. PLEASE PROVIDE SOME BACKGROUND ON THE COMPANY'S**
9 **IMT MECHANISM.**

10 A. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 62-133.7A authorizes the Commission to approve
11 a rate adjustment mechanism to enable a natural gas local
12 distribution company (LDC) to recover its prudently incurred capital
13 investments and associated costs of complying with federal gas
14 pipeline safety requirements. The Commission approved an IMT
15 mechanism in PSNC's 2016 general rate case⁷ and it is contained in
16 Rider E to PSNC's Service Regulations. The IMT mechanism
17 excludes recovery of certain costs (Excluded Costs) and includes bi-
18 annual rate adjustments. The Excluded Costs percentages are

⁶ Moderate Consequence Areas (MCAs) are defined as areas within a potential impact circle containing either five or more buildings intended for human occupancy or any portion of the paved surface, including shoulders, of a designated interstate, freeway, or expressway, or principal arterial roadway with four or more lanes, as defined by the Federal Highway Administration (as compared to 20 buildings which define an HCA).

⁷ G-5, Sub 565 Application for a General Rate Increase, Order Approving Rate Adjustments Effective March 1, 2017 (February 28, 2017)

1 intended to reduce the level of non-pipeline safety costs charged to
2 customers through the IMT mechanism These costs are still eligible
3 for recovery in rate base if prudent, in PSNC's next general rate case.

4 On October 4, 2018, an Agreement and Stipulation of Settlement
5 between Dominion Energy, Inc., SCANA Corporation,
6 Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company, LLC ("Transco"), and the
7 Public Staff was filed, which included stipulated Regulatory
8 Conditions and a Code of Conduct ("Merger Settlement")⁸. The
9 Merger Settlement included a rate moratorium for PSNC from filing
10 an application for a general rate case before April 1, 2021. On
11 November 19, 2018, the Commission issued its Order Approving
12 Merger Subject to Regulatory Conditions and Code of Conduct
13 ("Merger Order") in Docket Nos. E-22, Sub 551, and G-5, Sub 585⁹.

14 On June 26, 2020, PSNC filed a petition with the Commission for an
15 extension of its IMT mechanism in Rider E (without any modification)
16 until the earlier of two years or the Company's next general rate case.
17 The Commission granted PSNC's request for an extension to its IMT
18 mechanism until November 1, 2022 or its next general rate case on
19 August 10, 2020¹⁰.

⁸ Joint Application of Dominion Energy Inc. and SCANA Corporation

⁹ Order Approving Merger Subject to Regulatory Conditions and Code of Conduct

¹⁰ Order Approving Extension of Integrity Management Tracker

1 PSNC has included, as part of this proceeding, a proposal to
2 continue operation of this mechanism.

3 Since the Sub 565 rate case, PSNC has applied for and received
4 Commission approval to implement 10 bi-annual rate changes to
5 recover the Integrity Management Revenue Requirement (IMRR) on
6 plant investment through the IMT.

7 The Public Staff reviews and audits PSNC's monthly IMT reports filed
8 with the Commission through data requests and follow-up
9 conference calls with Company personnel regarding project scope,
10 project need, actual project costs incurred, and the nature of IMT-
11 associated costs. In addition, the Public Staff files an Annual IMT
12 Report with the Commission on May fifteenth of each year in order
13 to discuss any issues from the monthly audits, or the IMRR
14 calculations, summarize the completed IMT projects, and provide the
15 budgeted IMT projects for the next three years.

16 **Q. PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR RECOMMENDATION REGARDING**
17 **PSNC'S REQUEST TO CONTINUE THE IMT MECHANISM.**

18 A. Based on the importance of pipeline safety in complying with federal
19 safety guidelines and with any additional amendments to PHMSA
20 regulations, PSNC is required to perform integrity measures on its
21 transmission and distribution system to protect its customers,

1 employees, contractors and the general public. I recommend the IMT
2 mechanism remain in place.

3 **DEFERRED TIMP-RELATED O&M COSTS**

4 The Commission has approved deferred accounting treatment for
5 the Company's TIMP O&M costs incurred due to the pipeline safety
6 regulations promulgated by PHMSA. Since the last general rate
7 case, the Company has enacted significant measures to conform to
8 the regulations promulgated by PHMSA. Under PHMSA, pipeline
9 operators are mandated to identify High Consequence Areas
10 (HCAs), or covered segments, in order to identify threats to their
11 pipelines; identify and analyze the risk to help prioritize assessments;
12 remediate conditions found during integrity assessments; maintain
13 records; and implement preventative and mitigative measures.
14 Based on PHMSA guidelines, operators must perform pipeline
15 reassessments which drives up the costs added to the rate base
16 while allowing the Company to mitigate threats and risks identified
17 on these pipelines and ensure safety on their transmission lines. I
18 recommend that PSNC be allowed to continue its deferral
19 mechanism under TIMP until the resolution of the Company's next
20 general rate case proceeding.

1 In order to have more transparency with the audits, I further
2 recommend that the Company work with the Public Staff to
3 segregate TIMP costs by pipeline pigging segments or sub-projects
4 for better tracking purposes and to continue providing program
5 updates to the Commission, including the project scope/description,
6 in the monthly filings, as well as providing the budgeted and actual
7 costs incurred in an annual filing to provide the TIMP costs and
8 invoices from the prior 12-month period. While my area of
9 investigation focused on the necessity of this mechanism, Public
10 Staff accounting witness Feasel discusses the audit of these costs in
11 the rate case.

12 **DEFERRED DIMP-RELATED O&M COSTS**

13 **Q. PLEASE DISCUSS YOUR REVIEW OF THE COMPANY'S**
14 **DEFERRED DIMP-RELATED O&M COMPLIANCE COSTS.**

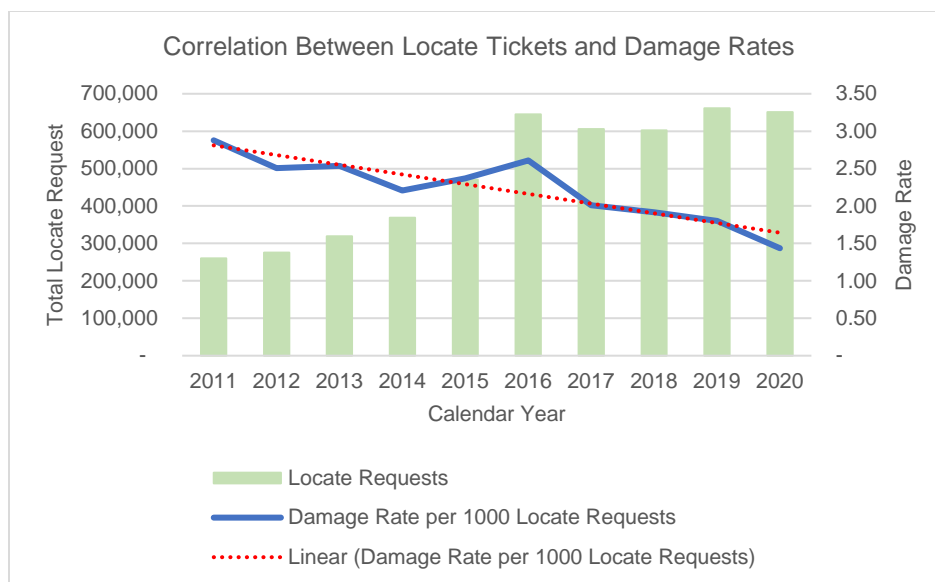
15 A. The Commission has approved deferred accounting treatment for
16 PSNC's DIMP O&M costs associated with PHMSA regulatory
17 compliance. Among other areas, the Company's DIMP primarily
18 covers the following areas of pipeline safety:

- 1 1. Inspection/Practices: (a) Enhanced leak survey, (b) legacy
2 cross bore, (c) Gold Shovel Standard certification¹¹, and (e)
3 locatability investigations/repair untoneable assets;
- 4 2. Enhanced Cathodic Protection: (a) Anode replacement, Close
5 internal surveys, AC mitigation;
- 6 3. Safety Communications/Public Awareness: Damage
7 prevention, 811-verification; and
- 8 4. Records: mapping services in the GIS.

9 The Company noted that third party contractors are engaged to
10 perform the work covered by these programs, however due to the
11 COVID-19 pandemic; the Company has experienced a delay in the
12 implementation of some of the DIMP programs.

13 As part of my investigation, I reviewed data request responses from
14 the Company regarding the DIMP-related O&M project scope and
15 associated costs. Under damage prevention program, I reviewed
16 data from 2011 to 2020 from federal pipeline safety regulators related
17 to the Company's annual damage rates and the relationship to the
18 number of locate requests. Patel Figure 1 below shows the history of
19 locate requests and the associated damage rates per 1000 locate
20 tickets.

¹¹ Gold Shovel Standard



Patel Figure 1

From 2011 to 2014, the Company received approximately 300,000 locate requests in any given year, and the damage rate averaged 2.51 damage incidents annually. After 2014, the damage rate increased; reaching a high of about 2.75, before declining substantially over the last four years despite an increase in locate requests.

The Company implemented measures to reduce third party damages such as mailers to registered excavation companies within the Company's service territory and newspaper, billboard, US mail, signage and social media advertising. The Company has various public awareness programs in place to help reduce third party damage incidents. They are: (1) Risk Ranking "811" tickets, and Watch & Protect Program; (2) Untoneable Repair Program; and (3)

1 Geofencing. Such measures have had a positive impact on the
2 damage ratio to its infrastructure; nevertheless, the Public Staff will
3 continue to analyze this data to assess the impacts of the programs.

4 **Q. WHAT IS YOUR RECOMMENDATION REGARDING THE**
5 **COMPANY'S DEFERRED DIMP O&M EXPENSES?**

6 A. The issue of pipeline safety, and specifically the testing of LDCs'
7 systems, along with the implementation of safety programs, has
8 come to the forefront in the past 10 to 15 years. The focus was
9 initially on transmission systems and now includes distribution
10 systems as well. The Company has incurred significant expenses to
11 address pipeline safety and remain compliant with PHMSA
12 regulations, which have been amended as recently as 2019 to
13 expand obligations.¹²

14 The primary cost drivers affecting the Company's forecast include
15 contracted labor to meet safety compliance and documentation per
16 federal DIMP regulatory requirements. It is difficult to put a cost on
17 pipeline safety and the prevention of property damage and personal
18 injury or death that can occur from a natural gas incident.

¹² Direct Testimony of Company witness Randall at page 6.

1 I recommend that PSNC be allowed to continue its deferral
2 mechanism until the resolution of the Company's next general rate
3 case proceeding, and that the Company provide to the Commission
4 annual program updates including project scope, and the budgeted
5 and actual costs incurred in an annual filing to provide the DIMP
6 costs and invoices from the prior 12-month period.. While my area of
7 investigation of focused on the necessity of this mechanism, Public
8 Staff accounting witness Feasel discusses the audit of these costs in
9 the rate case.

GREENTHERM™ PROGRAM

11 **Q. HAS THE PUBLIC STAFF REVIEWED THE COMPANY'S**
12 **PROPOSAL TO OFFER A VOLUNTARY RENEWABLE ENERGY**
13 **PROGRAM ALLOWING CUSTOMERS TO SUPPORT THE**
14 **DEVELOPMENT OF RENEWABLE ENERGY BY PURCHASING**
15 **"GREEN ATTRIBUTES" OF RENEWABLE NATURAL GAS?**

16 **A.** Yes. The Company is proposing to offer a GreenTherm™ Program¹³
17 modeled on a program offered by its affiliate Dominion Energy Utah.
18 Customers would participate by paying a monthly surcharge to
19 purchase a block of green attributes equal to five therms of
20 renewable natural gas. PSNC plans to issue a Request for Proposals

¹³ Testimony of Company witness Randall (GreenTherm™ program, pg. 17)

1 (RFP) if the Commission approves the program. Based on the results
2 of the RFP, the Company will determine the appropriate rate for a
3 five-therm block.

4 **Q. WHAT IS THE PUBLIC STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION**
5 **REGARDING THE PROPOSED GREENTHERM™ PROGRAM?**

6 A. The Public Staff supports PSNC's development of a voluntary
7 program allowing customers to support the development of
8 renewable gas and recommends that the Commission order PSNC
9 to proceed with the development of the program. However, the Public
10 Staff does not believe that the program should receive final approval
11 until the Company has received the results of the RFP, determined
12 the cost of a block of five therms, and determined its sources for
13 renewable gas. The Public Staff also believes the PSNC should
14 ensure that its green attributes meet certain standards and are
15 certified, such as the standards and certification offered by Green-
16 e®.¹⁴ The Company has also informed the Public Staff that it may
17 also offer carbon offsets through this program or a separate program.
18 Once the Company has fully developed the program, the Company
19 should update its proposal and file it with the Commission.

¹⁴ <https://www.green-e.org/renewable-fuels>

1 **RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

2 **Q. WHAT IS YOUR RECOMMENDATION REGARDING THE**
3 **COMPANY'S PROPOSED ADJUSTMENTS ON ITS R&D**
4 **EFFORTS?**

5 A. PSNC has proposed in this rate case a project that focuses on
6 studying the effects of blending hydrogen with natural gas in
7 determining its safety and viability in the testimony of Company
8 witness Randall, and witness Spaulding has the proposed
9 adjustment of \$285,000 to fund this initiative. An affiliated gas utility
10 in Utah has a similar pilot project underway, which is studying the
11 feasibility of hydrogen blending, its availability, storage and pricing.
12 Not having retained any contractors for this study, the program costs
13 as reflected in witness Spaulding's exhibits are based on an estimate
14 from the Utah pilot project. Company responses to Public Staff data
15 requests have not provided any costs specific to this program for
16 North Carolina. The Public Staff should be given the opportunity to
17 examine such new projects and make recommendations to the
18 Commission before its implementation. Therefore, the Public Staff
19 does not agree the Company's proposal of approving this project and
20 allowing the R&D costs to be recovered.

21 **PSNC'S QUALITY OF SERVICE**

1 **Q. WHAT FACTORS DID YOU CONSIDER IN YOUR EVALUATION**
2 **OF PSNC’S OVERALL QUALITY OF SERVICE PROVIDED TO ITS**
3 **CUSTOMERS?**

4 A. I reviewed the following information in my evaluation of PSNC’s
5 quality of service:

- 6 • Informal complaints and inquiries from PSNC customers
7 received by the Public Staff’s Consumer Services Division;
- 8 • Customer Call Center Monthly Reports filed in Docket No. G-
9 100, Sub 96PSNC;
- 10 • Data on pipeline incident and damage rates (see Patel Figure
11 3); and
- 12 • Company initiatives that impact the level of service being
13 provided to customers.

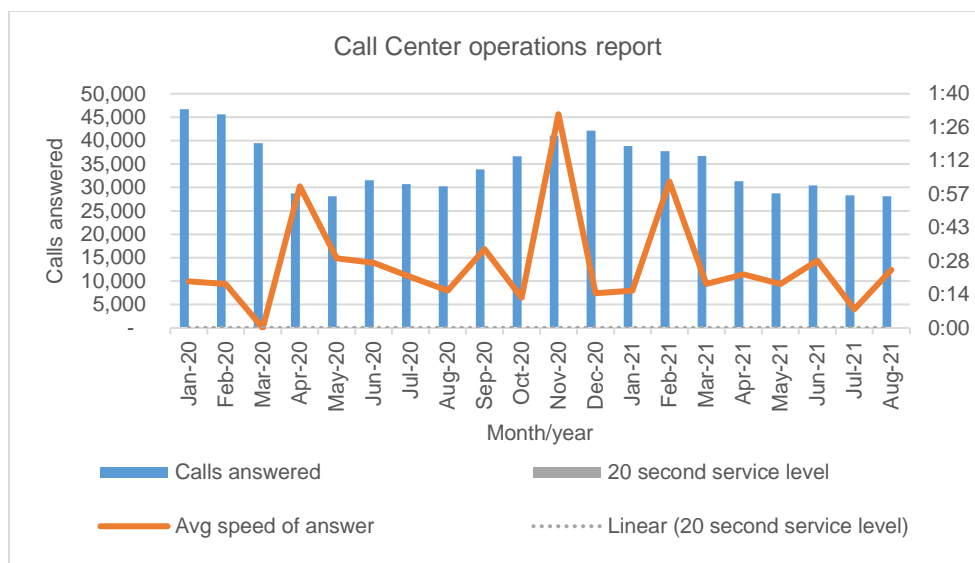
14 **Q. WHAT TYPES OF CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS AND INQUIRIES**
15 **HAVE BEEN RECEIVED BY THE PUBLIC STAFF’S CONSUMER**
16 **SERVICES DIVISION?**

17 A. For the period January 2016 through April 2021, the Public Staff’s
18 Consumer Services Division received approximately 499 contacts
19 from PSNC customers. Of those contacts, 78% related to billing and
20 payment issues including the establishment or modification of
21 payment arrangements and questions about current customer bills.
22 The remaining 22% involved rate, service, and meter-related issues.

1 **Q. PLEASE DESCRIBE THE OTHER DATA USED IN YOUR**
2 **REVIEW.**

3 A. The other data used in my review were obtained through PSNC's
4 Commission-required filings and responses to Public Staff data
5 requests. I was able to analyze the Company's: (1) call center
6 response times to customer inquiries, (2) response times to
7 emergency response calls/events, and (3) the correlation between
8 damage rates and the number of locate request tickets issued to the
9 Company.

10 With regard to the Customer Call Center information filed in Docket
11 No. G-100, Sub 96PSNC, from January 2020 to August 2021, the
12 Company and its third party call centers answered 694,788 calls with
13 an answer rate of 98%. In addition to the number of calls answered
14 by customer service representatives, the Company's Interactive
15 Voice Response (IVR) answering system handled an additional
16 472,484 calls during this same timeframe. Per G-100, Sub 96PSNC
17 Reports, on average, the Company's performance on the "20 second
18 service level" to customer calls has an overall high performance of
19 answering calls within 20 seconds as can be seen from Patel Figure
20 2 below, while also focusing on improving call response time during
21 the winter months.



1

2

Patel Figure 2

3 **Q. HOW WOULD YOU RATE PSNC'S SERVICE QUALITY?**

4 A. Based on my investigation, I believe the overall quality of service
 5 provided by PSNC to its North Carolina customers is adequate at this
 6 time.

7 **Q. DOES THIS CONCLUDE YOUR TESTIMONY?**

8 A. Yes, it does.

APPENDIX A**QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE****NEHA PATEL**

I graduated from the University Of Mumbai in 1995 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Electronic Engineering. I began working as a Utilities Engineer with the Natural Gas Division of the Public Staff in the spring of 2014. In 2020, I became Manager of the Natural Gas Section of the Energy Division.

I have worked on purchased gas cost adjustment procedures, tariff filings, customer utilization trackers, special contract review and analysis, weather normalization adjustments, customer complaint resolutions, integrity management riders, franchise exchange filings, compressed natural gas special contracts, peak day demand and capacity calculations, fuel and electric usage trackers, gas resellers, annual review of gas costs proceedings, renewable natural gas filings, cost of service studies, general rate case proceedings, and rate design.

PUBLIC STAFF
 PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF NORTH CAROLINA, INC.
 SUMMARY OF VOLUME AND BILL ADJUSTMENT
 DOCKET G-5, Sub 632

RATE SCHEDULE (1)	DESCRIPTION (2)			E A S O N (3)	BILLS/ DEMAND UNITS (4)	VOLUMES (Ths) (5)	WEATHER NORMALIZATION		CUSTOMER GROWTH		TOTAL	
							ADJUSTMENT (Ths) (6)	TOTAL (Ths) (7) (5) + (6)	ADJUSTMENT (BILLS) (8)	(Ths) (9)	(BILLS) (10) (4) + (8)	(DTS) (11) (7) + (9)
101 Residential Service				W	3,246,165	219,794,290	58,323,110	278,117,400	84,400	7,231,025	3,330,565	285,348,425
101 Residential Service				S	3,248,885	47,987,967	(9,262,415)	38,725,552	84,471	1,006,858	3,333,356	39,732,410
102 HE Residential Service				W	76,392	4,650,754	1,062,442	5,733,196	7,350	551,604	83,742	6,284,800
102 HE Residential Service				S	77,147	1,140,830	(221,032)	919,798	7,421	86,479	84,568	1,008,277
115 Open Flame (Gas Light)				W	281	33,714	-	33,714	-	-	281	33,714
115 Open Flame (Gas Light)				S	277	33,556	-	33,556	-	-	277	33,556
125 Small General Service	First	500	ths		533,875	67,672,208	19,621,522	87,293,730	-	-	533,875	87,293,730
	Next	4,500	ths			37,299,642	10,815,012	48,114,654	-	-		48,114,654
	All Over	5,000	ths			320,475	92,922	413,397	-	-		413,397
126 Small General Service Cooling					48	42,260	-	42,260	-	-	48	42,260
127 HE Small General Service	First	500	ths		1,254	328,563	41,686	370,249	-	-	1,254	370,249
	Next	4,500	ths			688,196	87,314	775,510	-	-		775,510
	All Over	5,000	ths			59,711	7,576	67,287	-	-		67,287
135 Natural Gas Vehicle Fuel				W	-	57,250	-	57,250	-	-	-	57,250
				S	-	100,641	-	100,641	-	-	-	100,641
140 Medium General Service	First	1,000	Ths		11,876	10,147,261	1,351,393	11,498,654	-	-	11,876	11,498,654
	All Over	1,000	Ths			21,470,504	2,859,402	24,329,906	-	-		24,329,906
145 Large General Service	First	15,000	Ths		3,133	25,709,920	-	25,709,920	-	-	3,133	25,709,920
	Next	15,000	Ths			6,868,036	-	6,868,036	-	-		6,868,036
	Next	15,000	Ths			3,814,813	-	3,814,813	-	-		3,814,813
	Next	15,000	Ths			2,610,463	-	2,610,463	-	-		2,610,463
	Next	1,000,000	Ths			7,067,001	-	7,067,001	-	-		7,067,001
	Over	1,060,000	Ths			-	-	-	-	-		-
150 Interruptible Service	First	15,000	Ths		103	1,278,460	-	1,278,460	-	-	103	1,278,460
	Next	15,000	Ths			969,240	-	969,240	-	-		969,240
	Next	70,000	Ths			2,623,900	-	2,623,900	-	-		2,623,900
	Next	500,000	Ths			2,967,960	-	2,967,960	-	-		2,967,960
	All Over	600,000	Ths			-	-	-	-	-		-
175 Large General Transportation Service	First	15,000	Ths		3,663	43,775,946	-	43,775,946	-	-	3,663	43,775,946
	Next	15,000	Ths			23,662,709	-	23,662,709	-	-		23,662,709
	Next	15,000	Ths			16,090,255	-	16,090,255	-	-		16,090,255
	Next	15,000	Ths			11,864,080	-	11,864,080	-	-		11,864,080
	Next	1,000,000	Ths			97,680,420	-	97,680,420	-	-		97,680,420
	All Over	1,060,000	Ths			17,577,890	-	17,577,890	-	-		17,577,890
180 Interruptible Transportation Service	First	15,000	Ths		1,293	17,511,730	-	17,511,730	-	-	1,293	17,511,730
	Next	15,000	Ths			14,888,370	-	14,888,370	-	-		14,888,370
	Next	70,000	Ths			38,767,090	-	38,767,090	-	-		38,767,090
	Next	500,000	Ths			45,356,760	-	45,356,760	-	-		45,356,760
	All Over	600,000	Ths			18,795,150	-	18,795,150	-	-		18,795,150
Special Contracts				W	30	223,378,520	-	223,378,520	-	(58,738,520)	30	164,640,000
Special Contracts				S	30	219,131,370	-	219,131,370	-	29,708,630	30	248,840,000
Subtotal w/Power Generation					7,204,452	1,254,217,905	84,798,931	1,339,016,836	183,642	(20,151,923.89)	7,388,094	1,318,864,912
Subtotal w/o Power Generation					7,204,392	811,708,015	84,798,931	896,506,946	183,642	8,877,966	7,388,034	905,384,912
Total					7,204,452	1,254,217,905	84,798,931	1,339,016,836	183,642	(20,151,924)	7,388,094	1,318,864,912

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Sep 23 2021

PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF NORTH CAROLINA, INC.
PUBLIC STAFF END-OF-PERIOD REVENUE LEVEL
Docket G-5, Sub G32

RATE SCHEDULE (1)	DESCRIPTION (2)	SEASON (3)	NUMBER OF BILLS (4)	MONTHLY FACILITIES CHARGE (5)	MONTHLY DEMAND CHARGE (6)	VOLUMES (Ths) (7)	END-OF PERIOD RATES (\$/Th) (8)	FACILITIES CHARGE REVENUES (9)	ENERGY CHARGE REVENUES (10)	MARGIN DECOUPLING ADJUSTMENT (11)	INTEGRITY RIDER REVENUES (12)	TOTAL REVENUES (13)
101	Residential Service	Winter Summer	3,330,565 3,333,356	\$10.00 10.00		285,348,425 39,732,410	\$0.7971 \$0.7311	\$33,305,653 \$33,333,560	\$227,436,962 \$29,046,378	4,150,950 2,117,908	\$22,909,034	\$264,893,565 \$64,497,846
			6,663,921			325,080,835		\$66,639,213	\$256,483,340	6,268,858		\$352,300,442
102	HE Residential Service	Winter Summer	83,742 84,568	\$10.00 10.00		6,284,800 1,008,277	\$0.7471 \$0.6811	\$837,420 \$845,680	\$4,695,060 \$686,687	40,224 47,670	513,956	\$5,572,703 \$1,580,037
			168,310			7,293,077		\$1,683,100	\$5,381,747	87,894		\$7,666,697
115	Open Flame (Gas Light)	Winter Summer	281 277	\$10.00 10.00		33,714 33,556	0.7970 0.7310	2,810 2,770	26,871 24,531	- -	4,741	29,681 27,301
			558			67,270		5,580	51,402	-		61,723
125	Small General Service	First Next All Over	500 4,500 5000	ths ths ths	\$17.50	87,293,730 48,114,654 413,397	\$0.6770 \$0.6270 \$0.5770	\$9,342,813 \$30,165,963 \$238,513	\$59,094,363 \$30,165,963 \$238,513	(939,779) (517,989) (4,451)	5,245,233	58,154,584 29,647,975 234,063
						135,821,780		\$89,498,840		(1,462,218)		88,036,622
	Total Rate Schedule 125		533,875			135,821,780		\$9,342,813	\$89,498,840	(\$1,462,218)		102,624,668
126	Small General Service Cooling	ths	48	\$30.00		42,260	0.5770	1,440	24,382	-	1,632	25,822
	Total Rate Schedule 126		48			42,260		\$1,440	\$24,382	-		\$27,454
127	HE Small General Service	First Next All Over	500 4,500 5000	ths ths ths	\$17.50	370,249 775,510 67,287	0.6270 0.5770 0.5270	21,945 447,469 35,460	222,146 447,469 35,460	(7,054) (15,822) (1,373)	46,846	224,892 431,648 34,087
						1,213,045			715,075	(24,748)		690,327
	Total Rate Schedule 127		1,254			1,213,045		\$21,945	\$715,075	(24,748)		\$769,070
135	Natural Gas Vehicle Fuel Customer Stations	ths Winter Summer				\$7,250 100,641	\$0.7314 \$0.7314	- -	\$41,871 \$73,606			\$41,871 73,606
	Total Rate Schedule 135		-			157,891		-	\$115,477			\$115,477
140	Medium General Service	First All Over	1,000 1,000	ths ths	\$100.00	11,498,654 24,329,906	0.5789 0.5287	\$1,167,600 12,863,951	6,656,916 150,999	71,364 150,999	1,383,645	6,728,280 13,014,950
						35,828,560		19,520,867		222,364		19,743,231
	Total Rate Schedule 140		11,876			35,828,560		1,187,600	19,520,867	222,364		22,314,476
145	Large General Sales Service	First Next Next Next All Over	15,000 15,000 15,000 1,000,000 1,060,000	ths ths ths ths ths	\$300.00	25,709,920 6,868,036 3,814,813 2,610,463 7,067,001	0.4481 0.4272 0.4086 0.3842 0.3639	\$939,900 2,934,025 1,558,542 1,002,914 2,571,823	11,519,844 2,934,025 1,558,542 1,002,914 2,571,823		436,125	11,519,844 2,934,025 1,558,542 1,002,914 2,571,823
						48,070,233			\$19,587,147			\$19,587,147
	Total Rate Schedule 145		3,133			48,070,233		\$99,900	\$19,587,147			20,963,173
150	Interruptible Sales Service	First Next Next All Over	15,000 15,000 70,000 500,000	ths ths ths ths	\$600.00	1,278,460 969,240 2,623,600 2,967,960	0.3827 0.3627 0.3427 0.3231	\$61,800 351,534 895,263 958,799	489,241 351,534 895,263 958,799		53,968	489,241 351,534 895,263 958,799
						7,839,560			\$2,698,837			\$2,698,837
	Total Rate Schedule 150		103			7,839,560		\$61,800	\$2,698,837			\$2,814,605
175	Large General Transportation Service	First Next Next Next All Over	15,000 15,000 15,000 1,000,000 1,060,000	ths ths ths ths ths	\$300.00	43,775,946 23,662,709 16,090,255 11,864,080 97,680,420	0.1390 0.1194 0.0999 0.0758 0.0507	1,088,900 2,800,482 1,607,256 895,179 5,443,730	6,084,856 2,800,482 1,607,256 895,179 5,443,730		1,994,137	6,084,856 2,800,482 1,607,256 895,179 5,443,730
						210,651,300			\$17,691,897			\$17,691,897
	Total Rate Schedule 175		3,663			210,651,300		1,088,900	\$17,691,897			\$20,784,934
180	Interruptible Transportation Service	First First Next Next All Over	15,000 15,000 70,000 500,000 600,000	ths ths ths ths ths	\$600.00	17,511,730 14,888,370 38,767,090 45,356,760 18,795,150	0.0976 0.0778 0.0590 0.0386 0.0188	\$775,800 1,708,444 2,249,267 1,748,503 353,349	1,708,444 1,168,017 2,249,267 1,748,503 353,349		931,545	1,708,444 1,168,017 2,249,267 1,748,503 353,349
						135,319,100			\$7,217,580			\$7,217,580
	Total Rate Schedule 180		1,293			135,319,100		775,800	\$7,217,580			\$8,934,926
Special Contracts		ths Winter ths Summer	30 30	\$0.00 \$0.00		164,640,000 248,840,000		- -	\$16,913,171 \$17,326,171			\$16,913,171 \$17,326,171
			60			413,480,000		-	\$34,239,341			\$4,239,341

TOTAL COMPANY	7,388,094 bills					1,318,864,912 ths		\$81,758,091	\$453,225,934	\$5,092,150	\$3,520,862	\$573,596,985
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OTHER OPERATING REVENUES	\$3,005,303
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUES	\$576,602,288
Sales	\$509,647,785
Transportation	\$28,709,860
Total Sales & Transportation	\$538,357,645
Special contracts	\$34,239,341
Sub Total	\$573,596,985
Other Operating Revenue	\$3,005,303
Total	\$576,602,288

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