



**NORTH CAROLINA
PUBLIC STAFF
UTILITIES COMMISSION**

July 25, 2023

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 661 – Application of Public Service Company of North Carolina, Inc. for Annual Review of Gas Costs Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 62-133.4(c) and Commission Rule R1-17(k)(6).

Dear Ms. Dunston:

Attached for filing on behalf of the Public Staff in the above-referenced docket is the testimony of Kuei Fen Sun, Regulatory Analyst II, Accounting Division of the North Carolina Utilities Commission.

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

Sincerely,

Electronically submitted
/s/ Elizabeth D. Culpepper
Staff Attorney
elizabeth.culpepper@psncuc.nc.gov

/s/ James Bernier, Jr.
Staff Attorney
james.bernier@psncuc.nc.gov

Attachments

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that a copy of this Testimony has been served on all parties of record or their attorneys, or both, in accordance with Commission Rule R1-39, by United States mail, first class or better; by hand delivery; or by means of facsimile or electronic delivery upon agreement of the receiving party.

This the 25th day of July, 2023.

Electronically submitted
/s/Elizabeth D. Culpepper
Staff Attorney

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BEFORE THE NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

DOCKET NO. G-5, SUB 661

In the Matter of
Application of Public Service Company) TESTIMONY OF
of North Carolina, Inc. for Annual) KUEI FEN SUN
Review of Gas Costs Pursuant to N.C.) PUBLIC STAFF – NORTH
Gen. Stat. § 62-133.4(c) and) CAROLINA UTILITIES
Commission Rule R1-17(k)(6)) COMMISSION

July 25, 2023

1 **Q. Please state your name, business address, and current**
2 **position.**

3 A. My name is Kuei Fen Sun. My business address is 430 North
4 Salisbury Street, Raleigh, North Carolina. I am a Public Utility
5 Regulatory Analyst with the Public Staff's Accounting Division of the
6 Public Staff – North Carolina Utilities Commission.

7 **Q. Briefly state your qualifications and duties.**

8 A. My qualifications and duties are attached as Appendix A.

9 **Q. What is the purpose of your testimony in this proceeding?**

10 A. The purpose of my testimony is: (1) to provide my conclusion
11 regarding whether the gas costs incurred by Public Service
12 Company of North Carolina, Inc. (PSNC or Company) during the
13 twelve-month review period ended March 31, 2023, were properly
14 accounted for; (2) to present the results of my review of gas costs as
15 filed by the Company in accordance with N.C. Gen. Stat. §
16 62-133.4(c), and Commission Rule R1-17(k)(6); (3) discuss the
17 Company's deferred account reporting during the review period,
18 (4) to provide my conclusion regarding the prudence of the
19 Company's hedging decisions during the review period, and (5) to
20 provide my conclusion regarding the Company's request to refund
21 the remaining over-collection of federal taxes through the All
22 Customers' deferred account.

1 **Q. Please explain how you conducted your review.**

2 A. I reviewed the testimony and exhibits of the Company's witnesses,
3 the Company's monthly deferred account reports, monthly financial
4 and operating reports, gas supply, pipeline transportation and
5 storage contracts, and the Company's responses to Public Staff data
6 requests. Each month, the Public Staff reviews all deferred account
7 reports filed by the Company for accuracy and reasonableness and
8 performs various analytical procedures on the underlying
9 calculations.

10 **Q. Has the Company properly accounted for its gas costs during**
11 **the review period?**

12 A. Yes. Based on my review, PSNC properly accounted for its gas costs
13 during the review period April 1, 2022, through March 31, 2023.

Accounting for and Analysis of Gas Costs

14 **Q. How does the Public Staff Accounting Division conduct its**
15 **review of the Company's filed gas costs?**

16 A. Each month the Accounting Division reviews all Deferred Account
17 reports filed by the Company for accuracy and reasonableness, and
18 performs various analytical procedures on an ongoing basis,
19 including the following:

20 (1) **Commodity Gas Cost True-Up** – The actual commodity gas
21 costs incurred are verified, the calculations and data supporting the

1 commodity gas costs collected from customers are checked, and the
2 overall calculation is reviewed for mathematical accuracy.

3 (2) **Fixed Gas Cost True-Up** – The actual fixed gas costs
4 incurred are compared with pipeline tariffs and gas contracts, the
5 rates and volumes underpinning the Company’s reported collections
6 from customers are verified, and the overall calculation is reviewed
7 for mathematical accuracy.

8 (3) **Negotiated Losses** – Negotiated prices for each customer
9 are reviewed to ensure that the Company does not sell gas to any
10 customer below cost, or the price of the customer's alternative fuel.

11 (4) **Temporary Increments and/or Decrements** – Regarding all
12 collections and/or refunds from customers that impact deferred
13 account balances, supporting data and calculations are verified.

14 (5) **Interest Accrual** – All calculations of accrued interest are
15 verified, in conformity with N.C.G.S. § 62-130 (e), and the
16 Commission’s Orders in Docket No. G-5, Subs 565, 595, 607, 608,
17 and 642.

18 (6) **Secondary Market Transactions** – The secondary market
19 transactions conducted by the utility are reviewed and verified to the
20 financial books and records, asset manager agreements, and the
21 monthly Deferred Gas Cost Accounts.

1 (7) Uncollectibles – In Docket No. G-5, Sub 473, the
2 Commission approved a mechanism to recover the gas cost portion
3 of the difference between the Company’s cost of gas incurred and
4 the amount collected from customers, effective for service rendered
5 on and after December 1, 2005. The Company records a journal
6 entry each month in the Sales Customers’ Only Deferred Account for
7 the gas cost portion of its uncollectibles write-offs. The Public Staff
8 reviews the calculations supporting those journal entries to ensure
9 that the proper amounts are recorded.

10 (8) Supplier Refunds – In Docket No. G-100, Sub 57, the
11 Commission held that, unless it orders refunds to be handled
12 differently, supplier refunds shall be flowed through to ratepayers in
13 the All Customers Deferred Account or applied to the NCUC Legal
14 Fund Reserve Account. As such, the Public Staff reviews supplier
15 refund documentation to verify that all amounts received by the
16 Company are flowed through to ratepayers.

17 **Q. How do the Company’s filed gas costs for the current review**
18 **period compare with those from the prior period?**

19 A. Per Creel Direct Exhibit 1, Schedule 1, the Company has filed total
20 gas costs of \$367,586,524 for the current review period, as
21 compared with \$302,423,025 for the prior period. The components

1 of filed gas costs for the current review period and prior twelve-month
 2 review period are shown in the table below:

	12 Months Ended		Increase	% Change
	March 31, 2023	March 31, 2022	(Decrease)	
Demand & Storage Charges	\$118,632,402	\$116,099,905	\$2,532,497	2.18%
Commodity Costs	296,597,503	225,333,870	71,263,633	31.63%
Other Costs	<u>(47,643,381)</u>	<u>(39,010,750)</u>	<u>(8,632,631)</u>	22.13%
3 Totals	<u>\$367,586,524</u>	<u>\$302,423,025</u>	<u>\$65,163,499</u>	<u>21.55%</u>

4 **Q. Please explain any significant increases or decreases in**
 5 **demand and storage charges.**

6 A. The Demand and Storage costs for the current review period and the
 7 prior twelve-month review period are shown in the table below:

	12 Months Ended		Increase (Decrease)	% Change
	March 31, 2023	March 31, 2022		
Transco:				
FT Reservation	\$50,463,537	\$50,378,892	\$84,645	0.17%
FT Momentum	1,992,275	1,986,733	5,542	0.28%
Southern Expansion	2,176,265	2,173,317	2,948	0.14%
Southeast Expansion	20,367,797	20,340,536	27,261	0.13%
GSS	2,165,601	1,700,706	464,895	27.34%
WSS	669,655	669,655	(0)	(0.00%)
LGA	382,611	382,611	0	0.00%
ESS	1,101,625	1,101,625	(0)	(0.00%)
Total Transco Charges	<u>\$79,319,366</u>	<u>\$78,734,075</u>	<u>\$585,291</u>	0.74%
Other Charges:				
Pine Needle LNG	\$3,208,847	\$2,904,884	\$303,963	10.46%
Cardinal	5,560,653	5,579,002	(18,349)	(0.33%)
Dominion Demand and Capacity (DTI-GSS)	3,648,463	2,076,910	1,571,553	75.67%
Eastern Gas Transmission	4,633,589	3,008,443	1,625,146	54.02%
Texas Gas Transmission	546,880	546,880	(1)	(0.00%)
Texas Eastern	563,328	563,328	-	0.00%
Columbia FSS/SST	5,956,162	7,496,070	(1,539,908)	(20.54%)
Eminence Demand and Capacity	1,119,937	1,119,937	(0)	(0.00%)
East Tennessee Patriot Expansion (Enbridge)	5,010,000	5,648,250	(638,250)	(11.30%)
Saltville Gas Storage	3,440,304	3,440,304	-	0.00%
Winter Peaking Reservation	4,420,292	3,631,375	788,917	21.73%
Cove Point LNG	1,157,460	1,157,460	-	0.00%
Piedmont Redelivery Agreement	9,120	9,120	-	0.00%
Firm Backhaul Capacity on Transco	-	148,800	(148,800)	(100.00%)
City of Monroe	38,001	35,067	2,934	8.37%
Total Other Charges	<u>\$39,313,035</u>	<u>\$37,365,830</u>	<u>\$1,947,205</u>	5.21%
1 Total Demand & Storage Charges	<u>\$118,632,402</u>	<u>\$116,099,905</u>	<u>\$2,532,497</u>	2.18%

2 The primary reason for the increase in **Transco General Storage**
3 **Service (GSS)** is due to the rate increases filed in FERC Dockets
4 RP22-00845-000, RP23-00087-000 and RP23-00361-000.

5 The increase in **Pine Needle LNG** was due a rate increase during
6 the current review period, effective May 1, 2022, in FERC Docket No.
7 RP22-00749-000.

8 The increase in **Dominion Demand and Capacity (DTI-GSS)**
9 charges was attributable to rate increases filed in FERC Dockets
10 RP22-00845-000, RP23-00087-000 and RP23-00361-000.

1 **Eastern Gas Transmission** charges increased due to rate
2 increases filed in FERC Dockets RP21-01187-006, RP22-01283-000
3 and RP21-01187-010.

4 The decrease in **Columbia FSS/SST** charges was due to both a
5 decrease in firm transportation reservation charges as well as
6 demand and storage charges.

7 **East Tennessee Expansion Project** had a decrease due to a
8 reduction in the monthly contract demand.

9 The increase in **Winter Peaking Reservation** charges was due to
10 an additional peak day supply contract that became effective in
11 November 2022, which increased monthly reservation charges.

12 The decrease in **Firm Backhaul Capacity on Transco** was a result
13 of the expiration of the Company's agreement to have firm delivery
14 of gas during the winter months.

15 The **City of Monroe** charges increased as a result of increased
16 operations and maintenance expense billed during the current
17 review period as compared to the previous review period.

18 **Q. Please explain any changes in commodity gas costs.**

19 A. Commodity gas costs for the current review period and the prior
20 twelve-month period are shown in the table below:

	12 Months Ended		Increase (Decrease)	% Change
	March 31, 2023	March 31, 2022		
Gas Supply Purchases	\$318,165,496	\$234,564,960	\$83,600,536	35.64%
Pipelines Transportation Charges	1,952,149	1,810,488	141,661	7.82%
Storage Injections	(55,964,504)	(37,399,976)	(18,564,528)	(49.64%)
Storage Withdrawals	32,444,362	26,358,398	6,085,964	23.09%
Total Commodity Gas Cost Expensed	\$296,597,503	\$225,333,870	\$71,263,633	31.63%
Gas Supply for Delivery (dt)	52,099,336	53,885,299	(1,785,963)	(3.31%)
Commodity Cost per dt	\$5.6929	\$4.1817	\$1.5112	36.14%

1

2 **Gas Supply Purchases** increased by \$83,600,536 during the
3 current review period, as compared with the prior twelve-month
4 review period. The primary driver for this change was the increase in
5 the commodity cost of gas, as the average commodity cost per dt
6 increased 36.14% during the review period.

7 **Pipeline Transportation Charges** increased by 7.62% during the
8 review period due to higher transportation rates as compared to the
9 prior review period.

10 The increase in **Storage Injections** was due to a higher average
11 cost for gas supplies injected into storage. The average cost of gas
12 placed in storage during the current review period was \$6.9556 per
13 dt, as compared with \$3.7332 per dt for the prior period.

14 The increase in **Storage Withdrawals** was due to higher average
15 cost of supply withdrawn from storage. PSNC's average cost of gas
16 withdrawn was \$5.2414 per dt in this review period as compared with
17 \$3.1692 per dt in the prior review period.

1 cost of gas in its accounting journal entry that offsets the CUT
2 deferral.

3 The **CUT Increment/Decrement** entries relate to the Sub 495 Order
4 in which the Commission authorized the Company to collect or
5 refund outstanding balances in the CUT Deferred Account by
6 imposing either an increment or a decrement to customer rates,
7 effective April and October of each year. The increase in the current
8 review period is due to higher under-collections in the current review
9 period as compared to the prior review period.

10 The **High Efficiency Discount Rate** entries represent accruals and
11 expenses associated with annual conservation-related expenses as
12 allowed in the Order issued in Docket No. G-5, Sub 632.

13 The **IMT Deferral** entries relate to the Order issued in Docket No.
14 G-5, Sub 565, in which the Commission approved the use of an
15 Integrity Management Tracker (IMT) by the Company beginning
16 November 1, 2016. The cost recovery mechanism allows PSNC to
17 timely recover its costs of compliance with federal pipeline safety and
18 integrity management requirements of the Pipeline and Hazardous
19 Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA).

20 The **Trailerred Gas** entries relate to commodity charges incurred in
21 connection with providing trailerred compressed natural gas to a
22 commercial customer.

1 **Capacity Release** is a short-term posting of unutilized firm
2 capacity on the electronic bulletin board that is released to third
3 parties at a biddable price. The overall net compensation from
4 capacity release transactions increased by 197.55% in the current
5 review period, due to an increase in volumes released, as compared
6 with the prior period, as well as higher gas market prices.

7 **Asset Management Agreements (AMAs)** are contractual
8 relationships where a party agrees to manage gas supply and
9 delivery arrangements, including transportation and storage
10 capacity, for another party. Typically, a shipper holding firm
11 transportation and/or storage capacity on a pipeline or multiple
12 pipelines temporarily releases all or a portion of that capacity along
13 with associated gas production and gas purchase agreements to an
14 asset manager. The asset manager uses that capacity to serve the
15 gas supply requirements of the releasing shipper, and, when the
16 capacity is not needed for that purpose, uses the capacity to make
17 releases or bundled sales to third parties. During the review period,
18 there were two contracts that ended, and one new contract. The
19 58.42% increase in net compensation from AMAs results from an
20 increase in the value of interstate pipeline and storage capacity
21 released under these agreements.

Beginning Balance as of April 1, 2022	\$26,767,209
Commodity Cost (Over) Under Collections	7,363,933
Demand Costs (Over) Under Collections	54,435,440
(Increment) / Decrement Activity	(21,056,781)
Secondary Market Transactions	(38,432,050)
Supplier Refunds	(3,146,903)
Miscellaneous	(254,397)
Interest	3,187,191
Ending Balance as of March 31, 2023	<u>\$28,863,641</u>

1 Additionally, as discussed below, I recommend including the
2 \$1,372,576 remaining balance related to the refund of federal taxes
3 from the Tax Rider in PSNC's last general rate case in Docket No.
4 G-5, Subs 632 and 634 (Subs 632 and 634) as a credit to the
5 Company's All Customers' Deferred Account balance. The net debit
6 balance in the All Customers' Deferred Account after the transfer is
7 (\$27,491,065).

8 Regarding the Sales Customers' Only Deferred Account balance at
9 March 31, 2023, Creel Direct Exhibit 1, Schedule 8 reflects a credit
10 balance of (\$18,999,083), due to the customers. As discussed
11 below, I recommend transferring the Company's Hedging Deferred
12 Account credit balance as of March 31, 2023, of (\$3,485,031) to the
13 Sales Customers' Only Deferred Account. Therefore, the
14 recommended balance in the Sales Customers' Only Deferred
15 Account is a net credit balance of (\$22,484,114), due to customers,
16 as determined below:

	Ending Balance per Creel Exhibit I, Schedule 8	(\$18,999,083)
	Transfer of Ending Credit Balance in Hedging Activities Deferred Account	(3,485,031)
1	Ending Balance, as Recommended by the Public Staff	<u>(\$22,484,114)</u>

2 **Q. Please explain why you recommend crediting the All**
3 **Customers' Deferred Account with the remaining balance**
4 **related to the refund of federal taxes from the Tax Rider in Subs**
5 **632 and 634.**

6 A. As discussed in the direct testimony of Company witness Creel, per
7 the Commission's Order in Subs 632 and 634, the Company was to
8 refund an over-collection of federal taxes through a rider over a one-
9 year period beginning November 1, 2021. The Company followed the
10 Commission's Order, however, since estimated sales did not match
11 actual sales, there remains an amount to be refunded to customers.
12 Instead of continuing the rider, which was set to expire after one year,
13 the Company seeks Commission approval to credit the remaining
14 balance to customers through the All Customers' Deferred Account.
15 I have reviewed the calculation and request and believe the
16 Company's request represents a reasonable methodology for which
17 to return the remaining over-collection to customers.

1 (3) Workpapers supporting the derivation of the maximum
2 hedge volumes targeted for each month;

3 (4) Periodic reports on the status of hedge coverage for
4 each month;

5 (5) Periodic reports on the market values of the various
6 financial instruments used by the Company to hedge;

7 (6) The monthly Hedging Program Status Report;

8 (7) The monthly report reconciling the Hedging Program
9 Status Report and the Hedging Deferred Account Report;

10 (8) Minutes from meetings of the Company's risk
11 management personnel;

12 (9) Minutes from meetings of the Company's risk
13 management personnel and its committees that pertain to hedging
14 activities;

15 (10) Reports and correspondence from the Company's
16 external and internal auditors that pertain to hedging activities;

17 (11) Hedging plan documents that set forth the Company's
18 gas price risk management policy, hedge strategy, and gas price risk
19 management operations; and

1 (12) Communications with Company personnel regarding
2 key hedging events and plan modifications under consideration by
3 the Company's risk management personnel.

4 (13) Testimony and exhibits of the Company's witnesses in
5 the annual review proceeding.

6 **Q. What is the standard set forth by the Commission for**
7 **evaluating the prudence of a Company's Hedging decision?**

8 A. In its February 26, 2002 Order on Hedging in Docket No. G-100,
9 Sub 84 (Hedging Order), the Commission stated that the standard
10 for reviewing the prudence of hedging decisions is that the decision
11 "must have been made in a reasonable manner and at an
12 appropriate time on the basis of what was reasonably known or
13 should have been known at that time." Hedging Order at 11-12.

14 **Q. Please describe the activity reported in the Company's hedging**
15 **deferred account during the review period.**

16 A. The Company experienced a net credit of \$3,485,031 in its Hedging
17 Deferred Account during the review period. This net credit amount
18 on March 31, 2023, is composed of the following items:

Economic (Gain)/Loss - Closed Positions	(\$4,296,933)
Premiums Paid	1,399,230
Brokerage Fees & Commissions	14,611
Interest on Hedging Deferred Account	(601,939)
Hedging Deferred Account Balance	<u>(\$3,485,031)</u>

1 **Economic (Gain)/Loss – Closed Positions** are the gains on
2 hedging positions that the Company realized during the review
3 period. **Premiums Paid** are the amounts spent by the Company on
4 futures and options positions during the current review period. As of
5 March 31, 2023, this amount includes call options purchased by
6 PSNC for the March 2024 contract period, a contract period which is
7 12 months beyond the end of the current review period and 11
8 months beyond the April 2023 prompt month.¹ **Brokerage Fees and**
9 **Commissions** are the amounts paid to brokers to complete the
10 transactions. The **Interest on Hedging Deferred Account** is the
11 amount accrued by the Company on its Hedging Deferred Account
12 in accordance with N.C.G.S. § 62-130(e).

13 The Company proposed that the \$3,485,031 credit balance in the
14 Hedging Deferred Account as of the end of the review period be
15 transferred to its Sales Customers' Only Deferred Account. The
16 hedging charges result in an annual credit of \$2.75 for the average
17 residential customer, which equates to approximately \$0.23 per
18 month. PSNC's weighted average hedged cost of gas for the review
19 period was \$7.32 per dt.

¹ Prompt month refers to the futures contract that is closest to expiration and is usually for delivery in the next calendar month (e.g., prompt month contracts traded in February are typically for delivery in March).

1 **Q. What is your conclusion regarding the prudence of the**
2 **Company's hedging activities?**

3 A. Based on what was reasonably known or should have been known
4 at the time the Company made its hedging decisions affecting the
5 review period, as opposed to the outcome of those decisions, my
6 analysis leads me to the conclusion that the Company's decisions
7 were prudent. I therefore recommend that the \$3,485,031 credit
8 balance in the Hedging Deferred Account as of the end of the review
9 period be transferred to the Company's Sales Customers' Only
10 Deferred Account.

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

12 A. Yes.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

KUEI FEN SUN

I graduated from North Carolina State University with a Master of Science in Accountancy (concentration in Auditing/ERM) in 2010. Prior to joining the Public Staff, I worked in state government and the private sector in North Carolina for 13 years as an external and internal auditor.

I am responsible for (1) examining and analyzing the applications, testimony, exhibits, books and records, and other data presented by utilities and other parties involved in Commission proceedings; and (2) preparing and presenting testimony, exhibits, and other documents for presentation to the Commission in those proceedings.

Since joining the Public Staff in August 2022, I have performed several audits and presented testimony and exhibits before the Commission regarding a range of electric, gas and water topics. I have filed testimony and exhibits regarding the C&P Enterprises, Inc. general rate case, as well as the Water and Sewer Investment Plans of Carolina Water Service, Inc. of North Carolina and Aqua North Carolina, Inc. Additionally, I have worked on electric rider rate proceedings, particularly in program cost review of demand-side management and energy efficiency (DSM-EE) programs for DEC, DEP and DENC, the Joint Agency Asset Rider proceeding (JAAR),

the Existing Demand Side Management Program Rider, the Bulk Power Marketing Rider (BPM), and the review of New River Light and Power Purchase Power Adjustment (PPA).