

1 STAFF CONFERENCE

MARCH 28, 2022

2 CHAIR MITCHELL: Good morning. Let's come
3 to order and go on the record, please. I'm Charlotte
4 Mitchell, Chair of the Utilities Commission. With me
5 this morning are Commissioners Brown-Bland, Gray,
6 Clodfelter, Duffley, Hughes, and McKissick. In
7 compliance with the State Government Ethics Act, I
8 remind Members of the Commission of our duty to avoid
9 conflicts of interest and inquire, at this time, as to
10 whether any member of the Commission has a known
11 conflict of interest with respect to matters coming
12 before us this morning.

13 (No response)

14 CHAIR MITCHELL: The record will reflect
15 that no conflicts have been identified, so we'll
16 proceed with Public Staff, Electric Item 1.

17 MR. SAILLOR: I'm Scott Sallor with the
18 Energy Division of the Public Staff. Item 1 is an
19 Application for a Certificate of Public Convenience
20 and Necessity and Registration for a Landfill
21 Gas-fueled generating facility. The Public Staff
22 recommends that the Commission approve the Certificate
23 and Registration for the facility.

24 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Move approval of

NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

1 the recommendation.

2 COMMISSIONER GRAY: Second.

3 CHAIR MITCHELL: It's been moved and
4 seconded that the item be approved as recommended by
5 the Public Staff. Any questions or discussion on the
6 motion?

7 (No response)

8 CHAIR MITCHELL: Hearing none, all in favor,
9 indicate with an aye.

10 (All Commissioners say aye)

11 CHAIR MITCHELL: Is there anyone opposed?

12 (No response)

13 CHAIR MITCHELL: Motion carries. Thank you,
14 Mr. Saillor. We'll proceed to Natural Gas, Item 2.

15 MS. PATEL: Good morning. Thank you for
16 allowing me to present all four -- five gas items.

17 CHAIR MITCHELL: Thank you, Ms. Patel. So
18 Ms. Patel will present Natural Gas, Items 2, 3, 5, and
19 6.

20 MS. PATEL: Yes.

21 CHAIR MITCHELL: Simultaneously.

22 MS. PATEL: Item 2 is Docket G-5, Sub 641,
23 Application of Public Service Company of North
24 Carolina for approval of a bi-annual adjustment to its

1 rate, under Rider C to its tariff. Public Staff has
2 reviewed the Application and recommends approval as
3 filed.

4 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Move approval of
5 the recommendation.

6 COMMISSIONER GRAY: Second.

7 CHAIR MITCHELL: Questions or discussion?

8 (No response)

9 CHAIR MITCHELL: All in favor of the motion,
10 indicate with an aye.

11 (All Commissioners say aye)

12 CHAIR MITCHELL: Is there anyone opposed?

13 (No response)

14 CHAIR MITCHELL: Motion carries.

15 MS. PATEL: Item 3 is Docket G-9, Sub 800,
16 Application of Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc. for
17 approval of a bi-annual adjustment to its rate under
18 Appendix C to its service regulation. Public Staff
19 has reviewed this filing and recommends approval as
20 filed.

21 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Move approval of
22 the recommendation.

23 COMMISSIONER GRAY: And a second.

24 CHAIR MITCHELL: It's been moved and

1 seconded that the item be approved as recommended by
2 the Public Staff. Questions or discussion on that
3 motion?

4 (No response)

5 CHAIR MITCHELL: Hearing none, all in favor,
6 indicated with an aye.

7 (All Commissioners say aye)

8 CHAIR MITCHELL: Is there anyone opposed?

9 (No response)

10 CHAIR MITCHELL: Motion carries.

11 MS. PATEL: Docket G-9, Sub 801, Application
12 of Piedmont Natural Gas, Inc. for approval of a
13 reduction in the demand charge component to its rates.
14 Public Staff has reviewed this filing and recommends
15 approval as filed.

16 COMMISSIONER GRAY: This is Number 5?

17 CHAIR MITCHELL: To be clear, this is Item
18 Number 5, yes.

19 COMMISSIONER GRAY: Move approval.

20 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Second.

21 CHAIR MITCHELL: It's been moved and
22 seconded that the item be approved as recommended by
23 the Public Staff. Questions or discussion on that
24 motion?

1 (No response)

2 CHAIR MITCHELL: All in favor, indicate with
3 an aye.

4 (All Commissioners say aye)

5 CHAIR MITCHELL: Is there anyone opposed?

6 (No response)

7 CHAIR MITCHELL: That motion carries.

8 MS. PATEL: Docket -- Item 6, Docket G-39,
9 Sub 48, Application of Cardinal Pipeline Company, LLC,
10 for approval of annual fuel tracker and electric power
11 cost adjustment. Public Staff has reviewed the filing
12 and recommends Commission approval as filed.

13 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Move approval of
14 the recommendation.

15 COMMISSIONER GRAY: Second.

16 CHAIR MITCHELL: It's been moved and
17 seconded that the item be approved as recommended by
18 the Public Staff. Questions or discussion on the
19 motion?

20 (No response)

21 CHAIR MITCHELL: Hearing none, all in favor,
22 indicate with an aye.

23 (All Commissioners say aye)

24 CHAIR MITCHELL: Is there anyone opposed?

1 (No response)

2 CHAIR MITCHELL: Motion carries. Thank you,
3 Ms. Patel. All right. We will now hear from the
4 Public Staff, Natural Gas, Item 4.

5 MR. MANESS: Good morning. I'm Mike Maness,
6 Director of the Public Staff accounting division.
7 Natural Gas, Item 4, concerns the petition and
8 supplemental petition of Piedmont Natural Gas Company
9 filed on March 15th, 2021 and March 22nd, 2022 in
10 Docket G-9, Sub 784 for approval of Appendix G or
11 Green Edge, a voluntary customer program that enables
12 the customers to fund the purchase of environmental
13 attributes. Piedmont and the Public Staff recommends
14 Commission approval of the program subject to the
15 addendum attached to Exhibit B to the supplemental
16 petition.

17 CHAIR MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Maness.
18 Commission has several questions regarding this item.
19 I'm looking out into the audience. I see there's some
20 representatives from the Company in attendance, so I
21 will ask that you-all please proceed on up to the
22 witness stand and I will ask our questions.

23 And, Mr. Maness, if you have a response,
24 feel free to chime in, but they are directed to the

1 Company. Good morning. Would you please introduce
2 yourself, for the record.

3 MS. POWERS: Good morning. My name is Pia
4 Powers. I'm the Managing Director of Gas Rates and
5 Regulatory for Piedmont Natural Gas.

6 CHAIR MITCHELL: Good morning, Ms. Powers.

7 MS. LITTLE: Good morning. I'm Kelly
8 Little. I'm the Director of Joint Venture Operations
9 Management for Duke Energy, Piedmont Natural Gas.

10 CHAIR MITCHELL: Good morning, Ms. Little.
11 So we have just a few questions. First, how did
12 Piedmont determine the initial monthly charge of \$3
13 per block of environmental attributes?

14 MS. LITTLE: Sure. So as a result of our
15 customer survey, we're the primary focus of a customer
16 program, was centered on affordable costs, reasonable
17 costs. We worked with an independent third-party to
18 identify a blend of renewable natural gas,
19 environmental attributes, the pricing associated with
20 those, and carbon offsets, the market price for those
21 as well.

22 We were able to achieve a blend that
23 resulted in a \$3 per block charge, a block being
24 defined as twelve-and-a-half therms of energy. We

1 focused on that \$3 charge because that gave customers
2 an entry level price and -- but was unlimited to allow
3 customers to participate at varying levels, so it was
4 a culmination of trying to keep a low price point in
5 coordination with our consultant using a blend of
6 those environmental attributes and our carbon offsets.

7 CHAIR MITCHELL: Thank you, Ms. Little.
8 Anything to add?

9 MS. POWERS: Yeah. I will just add for
10 clarification, ultimately, that the work and analysis
11 done was in development of the program for several
12 months in advance -- before Piedmont filed the
13 application in March of 2021.

14 CHAIR MITCHELL: Okay. Understood. Thank
15 you. Okay. The Commission notes that Section 2(f) of
16 the addendum indicates that the Company, Public Staff,
17 or other appropriate intervenors, at their discretion,
18 may request the Commission to modify the Green Edge
19 Program Rider rate per block. So help us understand
20 what that means? Does this mean that Piedmont doesn't
21 contemplate making regular adjustment filings, like
22 those provided for in other contexts, like the Margin
23 Decoupling Tracker, as an example of one?

24 MS. POWERS: Yes, that's correct. It was

1 intentional to not want to be -- have a fixed date
2 upon which Piedmont would need to make changes to it.
3 Typically, with our deferred accounts, we track a
4 balance, we forecast the balance. And at regular
5 junctures, would modify the rates in order to relieve
6 that balance.

7 And, indeed, as we've worked with Public
8 Staff and explained in the addendum, we tend to or
9 desire to record the costs and revenues to a deferred
10 account like our other riders. The reason that we do
11 not want to be limited to modifying the rate at
12 certain times is simply because we want what -- it's
13 multiple reasons, one of which is price certainty for
14 customers around their participation in the program
15 and price certainty around a low price point per
16 block.

17 We see there's an opportunity in our
18 forecast to possibly not ever have to change the rate.
19 It's just certainly the deferred account balance will
20 move over time. And we foresee that in the early
21 years, there will be an under-collected balance
22 because there are upfront costs that are not being
23 recovered through the revenues at a \$3 price point.
24 But later in the program, as it matures, we identified

1 that that under-collected balance will work off, and
2 so we would like the opportunity to be able, at our
3 discretion, to react as needed to the program in order
4 to address it.

5 And I will point out that one of the
6 reporting requirements, there are actually two of
7 them, under Section 3 -- 3(d)viii and 3(d)xii. Those
8 reporting requirements there would put the burden on
9 the Company to explain why it is addressing or not
10 addressing through a rate change or otherwise relief
11 of the different account balance at the various
12 reporting junctures.

13 The Company takes the burden for the
14 responsibility of whether -- if it's proposals or lack
15 of proposals going forward to change the rate, we'll
16 always be ready to defend those decisions and
17 certainly hear from other intervenors who might have a
18 different position on that, at times, but price
19 certainty for our customers was important.

20 CHAIR MITCHELL: Okay. That makes sense.
21 Thank you, Ms. Powers. Just to follow up, does the
22 Company -- can the Company predict from the point in
23 time at which the program goes from under-recovery to
24 recovery or perhaps over-recovery?

1 MS. POWERS: Yes. I think it's a couple of
2 years out, Kelly?

3 MS. LITTLE: It's a few years out, actually.
4 So our current profile projects that we would flip
5 from an under-recovery to an over-recovery in about
6 2028. I will say, however, though, that that is
7 completely dependent on the enrollments.

8 We have enrollment targets. We've had to
9 adjust our enrollment targets based off marketing
10 capabilities during Covid, so there could be an
11 opportunity for -- to increase our enrollments. But
12 until we can kind of get out of Covid, we're not
13 certain, so it would be enrollment targets.

14 We expect to flip somewhere around 2028.
15 And then, obviously, we would be looking for a market
16 price points in conjunction with the blend of the RNG
17 environmental attributes and carbon offsets to
18 determine what that flip, the timing of the flip and
19 what the volume of the flip would be.

20 CHAIR MITCHELL: Okay. Thank you.

21 MR. MANESS: If I could -- I'm sorry.

22 CHAIR MITCHELL: Go ahead, Mr. Maness.

23 MR. MANESS: If I could just add. If you
24 look at the reporting requirements, the monthly and

1 annual reporting requirements will have both reporting
2 of the actual position of the deferred account and
3 then their latest projections, and the Public Staff
4 will certainly monitor the deferred account to see if
5 it's continuing to be on track to get to a stable
6 point at a future date.

7 CHAIR MITCHELL: Okay. Thank you. You
8 mentioned, Ms. Powers, Section 3(d) just a moment ago.

9 I want to ask you about 3(d)ix. So the addendum
10 states the proposed annual report will provide a
11 listing of the rate per block under the Green Edge
12 Program in effect during each month of the historical
13 reporting year.

14 This suggests that rate adjustments are
15 contemplated, and you've just kind of gone through --
16 you've explained what the plan is going forward, so
17 I'm not asking you to retread there, but does the
18 Company have a point, a dollar amount or a percentage
19 of over or under-recovery that would trigger a rate
20 adjustment?

21 MS. POWERS: No. We don't have any specific
22 threshold like that regarding the deferred account.
23 It would be taken into -- rather, it would be taken
24 into account all the factors, including the actual

1 program experience that we get customer participation.
2 This is a brand new program for the Company and
3 frankly for -- in the industry for gas LDC's, and so
4 we're going to be leaning very heavily on the
5 experience that we gain operating this program, and
6 how customers react to it, how we see them reacting to
7 it.

8 And, frankly, industry changes in this
9 period of time, and all of that would go into the
10 decisions around potential future changes, not just
11 the deferred account balance.

12 CHAIR MITCHELL: Okay. Okay. Thank you.
13 Last question for you. Would you-all confirm that the
14 costs of the program aren't going to be recovered, are
15 not going to be recovered or sought to be recovered
16 from non-participating customers?

17 MS. POWERS: Correct. That's confirmed.

18 CHAIR MITCHELL: All right. Thank you. Let
19 me check in with colleagues. Commissioner McKissick.

20 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Thank you, Chair
21 Mitchell. Just a couple of questions. You talked
22 about enrollment, kind of probably capping out in
23 2028. How many do you anticipate enrolling in the
24 program, at that point?

1 MS. LITTLE: I'd like to make one point of
2 correction. We actually don't envision that the
3 enrollment caps out necessarily in '28. What we
4 reflect is that we see a flip in under-earnings versus
5 over-earnings in about '28.

6 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Okay.

7 MS. LITTLE: We actually expect the first
8 year -- now, I'll caveat first year because depending
9 on the timing of an authorization, to moved forward,
10 we'll have to prorate the first year. Our first year,
11 enrollments were projected at about 7,000 enrollments
12 with an annual increase of about 10,000, but an
13 attrition rate of about 16 percent, so we'll see some
14 give and take.

15 The trajectory is a positive upper
16 trajectory over the course of the program, and so
17 that's why our marketing campaign, that's why our
18 pricing structure and our earning structure recovery
19 of the deferred account would all interact, at that
20 point, so it's a flip of the earnings, not a flip of
21 the enrollments.

22 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Got it. Thank you
23 for that clarification. Reading through the
24 materials, it said that regardless of the amount of

1 gas, natural gas the customer uses, it's limited to
2 12.5 therms. So let me ask you this, because another
3 point in the exhibits that were provided, it talked
4 about a customer being able to purchase an unlimited
5 number of blocks. So, help me reconcile what was
6 stated versus the ability to purchase an unlimited
7 number of blocks.

8 MS. POWERS: The twelve-and-a-half therms,
9 ultimately, that is a single block. If a customer
10 chooses to participate at the -- I think at the
11 minimum level, it would be subscribing to purchase one
12 block, and that one block would be the Company
13 purchasing on the customer's behalf environmental
14 attributes that would offset the customer's personal
15 natural gas usage of 12.5 therms.

16 A customer -- Piedmont's typical residential
17 customer in North Carolina uses approximately 600
18 therms of natural gas a year. That's a little shy of
19 that, but rounding up to 600 therms a year. That's a
20 number you'd see in our recent rate case filing that's
21 used based on the regression analysis that we see
22 under Weather Normalized Usage, a customer typically
23 uses that amount.

24 And, so, if they were to subscribe to one

1 block at 12 -- which offsets twelve-and-a-half therms
2 per month, that ultimately translates into one-quarter
3 of their 600 therms of annual natural gas usage, the
4 footprint of that, one-quarter being offset. If they
5 were to subscribe to four blocks per month that they
6 pay for, that will wholly offset 600 -- the carbon
7 footprint impact of 600 therms per year, and any given
8 customer's going to use more or less than that amount.

9 Certainly weather influences the amount of
10 natural gas they use, and that's probably the biggest
11 influence of it. But in order to simplify this and
12 not try to customize blocks and offsets to any
13 particular usage, we're starting off with the very
14 simple program that takes into account a typical
15 natural gas, residential natural gas customer's usage
16 and explains it in terms that'll be understandable.

17 If a customer desires to purchase more than
18 four blocks per month, in theory, that would then be
19 offsetting more than their likely annual gas usage,
20 but nothing limits them from the extent to which they
21 desire and elect to participate in the program, the
22 Company simply buying attributes to cover their
23 personal natural gas usage.

24 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: And in terms of the

1 attributes, it looks like the primary one would be the
2 renewable natural gas certificates. Is that correct?
3 And then there would be other attributes, carbon
4 offset attributes. Is that correct?

5 MS. POWERS: It's a mix, and I'll defer to
6 Kelly to explain a bit more about that. But to
7 emphasize, I guess, upfront, it's not physical
8 delivery of renewal natural gas into the system.
9 Commissioner McKissick, you are exactly on point
10 there. It's an attribute, a paper transaction.

11 MS. LITTLE: And so I'll just add to that.
12 So what we are seeing in the market is that renewable
13 natural gas environmental attributes are currently a
14 fairly illiquid market, so we have to almost be
15 opportunistic to make sure that we can secure those
16 environmental attributes and the price point we need
17 to in order to be able to maintain that \$3 per twelve-
18 and-a-half therm block.

19 In order to be able to keep that price point
20 consistent for the customers, we also introduce carbon
21 offsets, so our focus will be the environmental
22 attributes for renewable natural gas and carbon
23 offsets, and a blend of those. What we'll do is when
24 we go to secure those attributes, the holistic

1 certificates on an annual basis, we'll make sure that
2 we're purchasing a blend of both that will keep that
3 price point consistent for the customers.

4 So we'll look at both. We'll look at them,
5 you know, on an ongoing basis with renewable
6 attributes being less liquid, carbon offsets being
7 more liquid, at whatever price point it will take to
8 keep within that block price.

9 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Thank you for that
10 explanation. That kind of answered the questions that
11 were in the back of my mind about how that would work,
12 because, you know, I didn't think there were enough of
13 renewable natural gas certificates that would allow
14 the program to be successful to keep the cost down, so
15 thank you for that information.

16 CHAIR MITCHELL: Just to follow up to one of
17 Commissioner McKissick's questions. Does the Company
18 project a point in time at which renewable natural gas
19 credits will be a more liquid market? Let me say that
20 more clearly. When there will be more liquidity in
21 that market?

22 MS. POWERS: I don't think we've got
23 confident projections around that, but...

24 MS. LITTLE: No, I agree. It's hard to say,

1 at this point, as we all recognize renewable natural
2 gas is an evolving business and industry, as well as
3 availability of attributes associated with that. We
4 are working, I think we've mentioned before, with an
5 independent third-party who has expertise in the
6 field. But even so, it's hard for us to really
7 evaluate when we might read some type of consistently
8 available attribute program or system for this program
9 or at all, at this point.

10 CHAIR MITCHELL: So how are you finding
11 those credits now? What is the Company doing?

12 MS. LITTLE: I might defer to you because
13 I'm not -- I don't work specifically in our
14 commodities desk, if we are.

15 MS. POWERS: Sure. At this point, I mean,
16 the Company's sourcing of the attributes will be
17 through a third-party initially.

18 CHAIR MITCHELL: Got it. Okay.

19 MS. LITTLE: For this program, for sure.

20 MS. POWERS: For this program.

21 CHAIR MITCHELL: And so going out into some
22 market place, I reckon -- okay. Thank you.
23 Commissioner Duffley, did you have a question? No
24 questions. All right. Commissioner Hughes.

1 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: All right. Is there a
2 promise or a target of North Carolina-based credits
3 that customers would get or is it left open? I know
4 some of your programs, I think the other Duke program,
5 which I'm not -- I have a second question, if you're
6 familiar with the Renewable Advantage Program. I
7 think that there's some general promises about that?

8 MS. POWERS: Quick answers, no. There are
9 no targets. We intentionally left the program to be
10 flexible, given that it's new, and we want to make
11 sure that we have the flexibility to respond at the
12 price point.

13 I mean, we are very sensitive to the \$3
14 price point, not wanting to make this a more extensive
15 program if we could help it, so the flexibility around
16 where the sourcing is from is -- is intentional. And
17 I thought with the locality of it, we don't have a
18 firm plan, although Kelly can speak to what customers
19 have expressed around a desire for local supply. I'll
20 turn it to Kelly.

21 MS. LITTLE: And I'll just add to that.
22 Excuse me. Our focus, our customers' survey response
23 as well were local in Piedmont jurisdiction. Our
24 customer survey was focused on the Piedmont Natural

1 Gas and Duke Energy Gas jurisdictions; so North
2 Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, and
3 Ohio. And so our hope is that we would source locally
4 first, and then, you know, expand outward. It really
5 would be a function of availability, so our focus will
6 be choosing our jurisdiction, North Carolina first.

7 And then to the extent it's not available,
8 then we might have to expand our focus to be able to
9 pull them in from other areas. I will be perfectly
10 honest. I have not participated on Renewable
11 Advantage. It's part of the electric system, and so I
12 don't know a lot of the details behind it. I know
13 that we did structure a lot of this program around how
14 Renewable Advantage is structured, but as far as how
15 Renewable Advantage operates on a daily basis, I'm not
16 positive.

17 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Thank you for that.
18 Just for a follow-up, will there be some sort of
19 disclosure that's pretty clear to customers when they
20 sign up that it could be out-of-state? Is there an
21 implication that -- you know, I just don't want
22 customers to assume it's local.

23 MS. POWERS: The materials that we'll be
24 disclosing to customers, you know, it hasn't all been

1 billed out yet, but some of the remaining work to be
2 done in order to implement this program, and a lot of
3 it has been waiting on getting this Commission's
4 approval of the program first before we incur the cost
5 for that stage of the development.

6 But disclosure, full transparency of it,
7 including opportunities for what would be purchased on
8 their behalf, that is anticipated to be fully
9 transparent to the customer prior to them electing it
10 and available, continuing even after they are
11 participating in the program.

12 In fact, we will have the availability and
13 for the customer to see how many attributes were
14 indeed purchased. So they will see, know what they're
15 getting into, transparency, prior to their election,
16 as well as once they have elected transparency while
17 they're participants.

18 And we intend and I've talked with Public
19 Staff about sharing those materials with them as
20 they're developed for Public Staff's review in
21 advance, so our transparency is also to this
22 Commission and the Public Staff as needed.

23 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Okay. The term
24 disclosure could be very, very small print, and, you

1 know, something available on your website, so I would
2 be curious, you know, and urge you to share that with
3 Public Staff. And I hope that's obvious because I
4 think you probably found in your marketing that the
5 value of these is probably, for some people, very
6 different; if it's North Carolina, local versus
7 out-of-state, so just for the truth and what their
8 getting would be really be important.

9 MS. POWERS: Understood. Thank you for that
10 comment.

11 CHAIR MITCHELL: Any additional questions?

12 (No response)

13 CHAIR MITCHELL: I'll take a motion.

14 COMMISSIONER DUFFLEY: I move that this
15 Agenda item be taken upstairs for further discussion.

16 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Make it second.

17 CHAIR MITCHELL: All in favor?

18 (All Commissioners say aye)

19 CHAIR MITCHELL: Anyone opposed?

20 (No response)

21 CHAIR MITCHELL: We will consider this
22 further in Executive session. Thank you very much for
23 being here this morning.

24 MS. POWERS: Thank you.

1 MS. LITTLE: Thank you.

2 CHAIR MITCHELL: Commission has before us
3 for approval our minutes of the March 21st Staff
4 Conference. I'll take a motion, please.

5 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Move approval.

6 COMMISSIONER GRAY: Second.

7 CHAIR MITCHELL: It's been moved and
8 seconded that the minutes be approved. Questions or
9 discussion?

10 (No response)

11 CHAIR MITCHELL: All in favor of approval of
12 the minutes, indicate with an aye.

13 (All Commissioners say aye)

14 CHAIR MITCHELL: Anyone opposed?

15 (No response)

16 CHAIR MITCHELL: Our minutes are approved.
17 All right. Just checking in to see if there's
18 additional business for the Commission this morning.
19 Mr. Jirak is approaching the witness stand. Perfect,
20 Mr. Jirak. You can sit or stand. Whatever you're
21 comfortable doing.

22 MR. JIRAK: Chair Mitchell, Commissioners,
23 thank you for this opportunity. With your lead, I'd
24 like to take a minute just to introduce some new team

1 members to the Commission in a formal way this
2 morning.

3 CHAIR MITCHELL: Please do so.

4 MR. JIRAK: Thank you. Well, we are
5 delighted to have -- over the past year, we've had a
6 number of changes on our team, and so I want to take
7 this chance, now that we're back in person with these
8 Staff Conferences, to introduce them to you in person.

9 I'm going to start on the far end here with
10 Kathleen Richard. Kathleen Richard comes to us from
11 Southern Star Central Pipeline in Owensboro, Kentucky.
12 She's a University of Kentucky graduate and has asked
13 that the Commission kindly not make any Peacock jokes
14 this morning, as we do this introduction, but she is a
15 university -- undergraduate of the -- University of
16 Louisville Law School graduate.

17 At her former employer, she handled a wide
18 range of regulatory matters, including rate making on
19 the gas side, and she brings that expertise to here,
20 here to us, North Carolina for Duke, and she's gotten
21 in the deep end right away with us on a wide variety
22 of regulatory matters.

23 I know she's engaged with a number of
24 you-all on securitization matters. She's going to be

1 handling the affiliate agreements, merger conditions,
2 regulatory Code of Conduct issues as well, and we are
3 just thrilled to have her on board. Her and her
4 family relocated to the Garner area, and she has two
5 unbelievably cute daughters, Olivia and Shelby. And
6 so we are just very excited to have her on the team.

7 Fun fact about Kathleen is that she can
8 actually write by hand backwards, sort of mirror
9 script backwards. So we haven't figured out how
10 that's going to help us, but I can envision something.

11 CHAIR MITCHELL: I'm sure you will. I'm
12 sure you will figure that out, Mr. Jirak.

13 MR. JIRAK: Yeah, some future virtual
14 proceeding we'll need that skill, and it'll come in
15 handy. So Kathleen started in the spring of last
16 year, but I know she'll be appearing before you in a
17 wide variety of matters, so we're really glad to have
18 her on board.

19 CHAIR MITCHELL: Welcome, Ms. Richard.
20 We're glad you're here, glad to say hello to you in
21 person, and look forward to working with you.

22 MS. RICHARD: As do I. Thank you-all.

23 MR. JIRAK: And then next up, I want to
24 introduce Ladawn Toon to you. We're also very excited

1 to have Ladawn start with us. She came on board
2 towards the end of last year. She comes to us from
3 the northeast in search of warmer weather, which we
4 haven't quite delivered yet, but I see some warmer
5 weather here coming down the pipeline.

6 But Ladawn has a really interesting and
7 unique background perspective on the regulatory space.
8 Served with the AG's office in Rhode Island and got
9 involvement there on the utility's side in Rhode
10 Island, as well as some very interesting multi-state
11 litigation-related tobacco issues, and so had a lot of
12 great experience there.

13 Then, moved on to the Massachusetts
14 Department of Public Utilities where she served as
15 counsel there as well and had the opportunity to serve
16 as overseeing, as an administrator of proceedings, so
17 she kind of sat on your side of the bench,
18 so-to-speak, on a number of proceedings, so has some
19 very great perspective to bring to us in that respect.

20 Also served as vice-president and counsel
21 for State Street Bank in Massachusetts. She's a
22 graduate of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth,
23 and a graduate of the Roger Williams Law School in
24 Massachusetts as well. So we are super excited to

1 have Ladawn on board. Her fun fact is that she has 50
2 plus paternal/maternal cousins, so she's gotten very
3 good at remembering birthdays and holidays, and
4 keeping all those names straight.

5 So, again, we are thrilled to have her on
6 board. She'll be appearing before you on a wide
7 variety of context, including handling fuel
8 proceedings, CPRE Rider proceedings. We'll have some
9 involvement in the carbon plans as well, so we look
10 forward to having her and have more time to work with
11 you-all as well. So thanks.

12 CHAIR MITCHELL: Good morning, Ms. Toon.
13 We're so glad you're here with us as well, and very
14 nice to meet you in person. I look forward to seeing
15 you in the hearing room, and I hope that you're not
16 the one that has to cook Christmas or holiday meals
17 for all those cousins because that would be quite a
18 challenge.

19 MS. TOON: I've escaped that task. Thank
20 you.

21 CHAIR MITCHELL: Oh, smart. Is that why you
22 moved down here?

23 MS. TOON: Absolutely.

24 CHAIR MITCHELL: All right.

1 MR. JIRAK: I forgot to mention Ladawn
2 relocated to the Cary area and has also a wonderful
3 daughter, Naomi, who we're all excited to meet as
4 well, so...

5 CHAIR MITCHELL: Well, welcome, both of
6 you-all, and your families to North Carolina. And,
7 again, thanks for coming here this morning.

8 MR. JIRAK: Thank you very much, Chair
9 Mitchell.

10 MS. TOON: Thank you.

11 MS. RICHARD: Thank you.

12 CHAIR MITCHELL: Anything else for the
13 Commission this morning?

14 (No response)

15 CHAIR MITCHELL: Well, if I may, I'll take a
16 minute as we say hello to some new faces. We will say
17 goodbye to a few familiar faces round here. I want to
18 recognize Julie Perry of the Public Staff. Today is
19 her last day. I know she's not in the room. I don't
20 see her anywhere. I'm hoping she can hear us or see
21 us somehow. Dianna, do you want to come up and say
22 goodbye to her? I hate to put you on the spot, but
23 I'm happy to, if you'll --

24 MS. DOWNEY: Okay. I'm happy to. Julie

1 where ever you are, we have so enjoyed and valued your
2 contributions to the Utilities Commission and the work
3 of the Public Staff for the last 30 years? How long
4 has it been? Thirty-two years. That's a long time.
5 And we will truly miss her, but I've already told her
6 when we're both retired, she needs to come and see me
7 in Moorehead City, and she's already committed to do
8 that. So, Julie, thank you so much for your
9 contributions over the years, and we will miss you.

10 CHAIR MITCHELL: Well, thank you, Dianna. I
11 see a few, sort of, relieved-looking faces out there.
12 I won't call you out. Ms. Powers, and I see some PSNC
13 folks over there. You're looking a little happier
14 this morning.

15 We wish Julie the best and so appreciate her
16 years of service to the public. She has been a
17 wonderful contributor here to our work and wish her
18 the very best as she goes out into the world to enjoy
19 life. Julie, I sure do hope you can hear us.

20 And last, I would like to recognize Bridget
21 Paschal. Bridget is a member of the Commission's
22 staff. She has been with us for a number of years and
23 has reached that precious point in life where it's
24 time to go out and, like Julie, enjoy the rest of her

1 life.

2 Bridget started with the Public Staff and
3 made a transition, really, many years ago to the
4 Commission, and so she's not a face that has been on
5 the witness stand in recent years, but she has been
6 hard at work on our side of the hall, and has been an
7 absolutely wonderful and amazing contributor to the
8 work of this body.

9 She is the utmost professional and has
10 really enabled us to do the work that has enabled this
11 Commission to do the work that it is charged with
12 doing, and she has done a spectacular job. We will
13 miss her very much, but are happy to see her go out
14 and enjoy the rest of her days, and I'd just like to
15 say thank you, Bridget. I hope she can hear us too.
16 We will miss you and wish you the very best.

17 With that, anything else?

18 (No response)

19 CHAIR MITCHELL: All right. Thank you very
20 much, everybody. We'll be adjourned. Let's go off
21 the record, please.

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23 WHEREUPON, this conference is adjourned.

24 -----

1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2 I, TONJA VINES, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the
3 proceedings in the above-captioned matter were taken
4 before me, that I did report in stenographic shorthand
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6 pages are a true and correct transcription to the best
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Tonja Vines

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