

BEFORE THE STATE CORPORATION COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF KANSAS

In the Matter of the Application of Black Hills/Kansas Gas Utility Company, LLC, d/b/a Black Hills Energy, for Approval of the Commission to Make Certain Changes in its Rates for Natural Gas Service.)
)
) Docket No. 21-BHCG-418-RTS
)
)

PETITION TO INTERVENE AND MOTION FOR PROTECTIVE ORDER AND DISCOVERY ORDER

COMES NOW, the Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board ("CURB") and petitions the Corporation Commission of the State of the Kansas ("Commission") for intervention in the above-captioned case pursuant to K.S.A. 66-1223 and K.S.A. 77-521(a). In support of its petition and motion, CURB states and alleges as follows:

1. On May 7, 2021, Black Hills/Kansas Gas Utility Company, LLC, d/b/a Black Hills Energy ("Black Hills") filed an application with the Kansas Corporation Commission for approval to make certain changes in its rates for natural gas service.
2. CURB is composed of five volunteer board members.¹
3. CURB has specific statutory authority to "represent residential and small commercial ratepayers before the state corporation commission"² and to "function as an *official intervenor in cases* filed with the state corporation commission."³ CURB's authority and role as the official intervenor in cases filed with the Commission has been recognized by the Kansas Supreme Court.⁴

¹ K.S.A. 66-1222(a).

² K.S.A. 66-1223(a).

³ K.S.A. 66-1223(b).

⁴ K.S.A. 66-1223(b). *See, Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board v. Kansas Corporation Comm'n*, 24 Kan. App.2d 63, 68, rev. den. 262 Kan. 959 (1997) ("*CURB v. KCC*"). *See also, Farmland Industries, Inc. v. Kansas Corp. Comm'n*, 29 Kan.App.2d 1031, 1047-48, 37 P.3d 640 (2001) ("The bulk of current customers otherwise entitled to receive refunds are *statutorily represented* by CURB. See K.S.A. 66-1223(a)")

CURB also has specific statutory authority to seek judicial review of Commission orders and decisions on behalf of residential and small commercial ratepayers.⁵

4. CURB's express statutory authority referenced above reflects the intent of the Legislature that CURB should participate in cases filed with the Commission. This fulfills the requirement under K.S.A. 77-521(a)(2) because CURB "qualifies as an intervener under any provision of law."

5. The residential and small commercial ratepayers whose interests CURB represents will be bound by any Commission order or activity in this proceeding. The rates paid and the services received by residential and small commercial ratepayers may be substantially affected by any Commission order or activity in this proceeding with respect to Black Hills' proposed changes in its rates for natural gas service, as described in Black Hills' filing.

6. The representation of CURB's interests in this proceeding by existing parties is inadequate. No other party to this proceeding is authorized to (a) specifically represent residential and small commercial ratepayers before the Commission, (b) function as the statutory official intervener in cases filed with the Commission, or (c) seek judicial review of Commission orders and decisions on behalf of residential and small commercial ratepayers. While Commission Staff may have authority to investigate, evaluate, testify and offer exhibits on behalf of the *general public* pursuant to a definition contained in a Commission regulation,⁶ Staff does not specifically represent residential and small commercial ratepayers and is expressly denied the right to appeal Commission orders.⁷

⁵ K.S.A. 66-1223.

⁶ Staff's authority to represent the general public is not specifically authorized by statute, but merely referenced in the definition section of Commission regulations. K.A.R. 82-1-204(q) ("Technical staff may conduct investigations and

7. Accordingly, CURB has a substantial and vital interest in the outcome of this proceeding which cannot be adequately represented by any other party. Pursuant to K.S.A. 77-521(a)(2), CURB qualifies as an intervenor (a) under provision of law and (b) because the rights, duties, privileges, immunities, or other legal interests of residential and small commercial ratepayers may be substantially affected by this proceeding.⁸

8. CURB's requested intervention is in the interests of justice and will not impair the orderly and prompt conduct of the proceedings.⁹

9. CURB therefore requests that the Commission grant CURB's Petition to Intervene and participate fully in this docket, including but not limited to the right to conduct discovery, file pleadings and testimony, present oral argument, and fully participate in any scheduled hearings.

10. In addition to undersigned counsel, please include the following CURB representatives with all electronic notices, pleadings, and correspondence regarding this Application as follows:

Shonda Rabb
Public Service Administrator
Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board
1500 SW Arrowhead Road
Topeka, KS 66604
Email: s.rabb@curb.kansas.gov

Della Smith
Senior Administrative Specialist
Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board
1500 SW Arrowhead Road
Topeka, KS 66604
Email: d.smith@curb.kansas.gov

11. Pleadings, testimony, exhibits and discovery responses may contain confidential information. CURB is requesting the Commission issue a Protective Order and Discovery Order in this docket to allow CURB and its consultant access to the full information contained in this filing.

otherwise evaluate issues raised, and may testify and offer exhibits on behalf of the *general public*.”) (emphasis added).

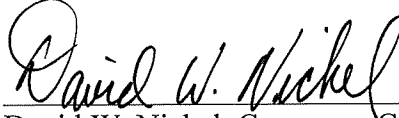
⁷ K.A.R. 82-1-204(i)(3).

⁸ K.S.A. 77-521(a)(2).

⁹ K.S.A. 77-521(a)(3).

WHEREFORE, CURB respectfully requests the Commission grant its Petition for Intervention and Motion for Protective Order and Discovery Order in this Docket.

Respectfully submitted,



David W. Nickel, Consumer Counsel #11170

Todd E. Love, Attorney #13445

Joseph R. Astrab, Attorney #26414

Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board

1500 SW Arrowhead Road

Topeka, KS 66604

(785) 271-3200

d.nickel@curb.kansas.gov

t.love@curb.kansas.gov

j.astrab@curb.kansas.gov

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

21-BHCG-418-RTS

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the above and foregoing document was served by electronic service on this 11th day of May, 2021, to the following:

JAMES G. FLAHERTY, ATTORNEY
ANDERSON & BYRD, L.L.P.
216 S HICKORY
PO BOX 17
OTTAWA, KS 66067
jflaherty@andersonbyrd.com

DARI DORNAN, ASSOCIATE GENERAL
COUNSEL
BLACK HILLS/KANSAS GAS UTILITY
COMPANY LLC D/B/A Black Hills Energy
1731 WINDHOEK DRIVE
LINCOLN, NE 68512
dari.dornan@blackhillscorp.com

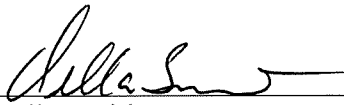
DOUGLAS LAW, DEPUTY GENERAL
COUNSEL
BLACK HILLS/KANSAS GAS UTILITY
COMPANY, LLC D/B/A BLACK HILLS
ENERGY
1731 Windhoek Drive
Lincoln, NE 68512
douglas.law@blackhillscorp.com

TOM STEVENS, DIRECTOR REGULATORY
& FINANCE
BLACK HILLS/KANSAS GAS UTILITY
COMPANY, LLC D/B/A BLACK HILLS
ENERGY
655 EAST MILLSAP DRIVE
FAYETTEVILLE, AR 72703
TOM.STEVENS@BLACKHILLSCORP.COM

COLE BAILEY, LITIGATION COUNSEL
KANSAS CORPORATION COMMISSION
1500 SW ARROWHEAD RD
TOPEKA, KS 66604
c.bailey@kcc.ks.gov

LAUREN LAUSHMAN, OFFICE OF
GENERAL COUNSEL ATTORNEY
KANSAS CORPORATION COMMISSION
1500 SW ARROWHEAD RD
TOPEKA, KS 66604
l.laushman@kcc.ks.gov

CARLY MASENTHIN, LITIGATION
COUNSEL
KANSAS CORPORATION COMMISSION
1500 SW ARROWHEAD RD
TOPEKA, KS 66604
c.masenthin@kcc.ks.gov



Della Smith
Senior Administrative Specialist