BEFORE THE STATE COPRPORATION COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF KANSAS

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In the Matter of a General Investigation Regarding the Effect of Federal Income Tax Reform on the Revenue Requirements of Kansas Public Utilities and Request to Issue an Accounting Authority Order Requiring Certain Regulated Public Utilities to Defer Effects of Tax Reform to Deferred Revenue Account.

Docket No. 18-GIMX-248-GIV

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

STACEY HARDEN

ON BEHALF OF

THE CITIZENS' UTILITY RATEPAYER BOARD

1	I.	INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND
2	Q.	Please state your name and business address.
3	A.	My name is Stacey Harden. My business address is 1500 SW Arrowhead Road, Topeka,
4		KS 66604.
5		
6	Q.	By whom are you employed and in what capacity?
7	A.	I am employed by the Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board ("CURB") as a Senior Regulatory
8		Analyst.
9		
10	Q.	Please describe your education background.
11	A.	I earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Baker University in 2001. I
12		earned a Master of Business Administration degree from Baker University in 2004.
13		
14	Q.	Please summarize your professional experience in the utility industry.
15	A.	I served as a Regulatory Analyst for CURB from February 2008 until March 2016. I
16		rejoined the CURB Staff in September 2017 as a Senior Regulatory Analyst.
17		
18	Q.	Have you previously testified before the Commission?
19	A.	Yes. I have previously offered both written and live testimony in over twenty-five
20		proceedings before the Kansas Corporation Commission ("Commission"). A list of these
21		dockets is available upon request.
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23		

1	Q.	What is the purpose of your testimony?
2	A.	The purpose of my testimony is to provide support to a Settlement Agreement
3		("Agreement") between Empire District Electric Company ("Empire"), the Staff of the
4		Kansas Corporation Commission ("Staff"), and CURB. My testimony will be divided into
5		four sections:
6		1. First, I will briefly summarize the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and the Commission's
7		Order in this general investigation docket.
8		2. Second, I will provide a review of the Agreement, including Empire's
9		calculations and support for the amount to be accrued as a regulatory liability.
10		3. Third, I will provide testimony that the Agreement reached by the parties in this
11		proceeding addresses the concerns of CURB in Docket No. 18-GIMX-273-
12		COM.
13		4. Finally, I will address the Commission's standard of review for Settlement
14		Agreements that was established in Docket No. 08-ATMG-280-RTS.
15		
16	II.	GENERAL INVESTIGATION REGARDING THE TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT
17	Q.	Please provide a brief background of the Commission's General Investigation in this
18		proceeding as it relates to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act "(TCJA").
19	A.	On December 14, 2017, Staff filed a Motion to Open a General Investigation and Issue
20		Accounting Authority Order Regarding Federal Tax Reform ("Staff Motion"). Staff
21		attached a Report and Recommendation ("Staff's R&R") to the Staff Motion, which
22		recommended the Commission issue an Order addressing the following:

- a. Opening a general investigation for the purpose of examining the financial
 impact of anticipated federal income tax reform on regulated public utilities
 operating in Kansas;
- Requiring, through the use of an Accounting Authority Order ("AAO"), 4 b. certain regulated public utilities that are taxed at the corporate level, which included 5 Empire, to track and accumulate in a deferred revenue account, with interest 6 compounded monthly at the most current Commission-approved customer deposit 7 interest rate, the reduction in their regulated cost of service that would occur in the 8 event that a new lower federal income tax rate is signed into law. These deferrals 9 should take effect at the same time as the new federal corporate tax rate change and 10 the calculations should be performed using the cost of service data that was used to 11 set the utilities' last Commission-approved revenue requirement (including any 12 line-item surcharges that contain a provision for regulated income tax expense); 13 and 14
- Confirming that the Commission's intention regarding the AAO is to 15 c. preserve any potential tax benefits so that they may be evaluated in the context of 16 a comprehensive evaluation of the reasonableness of the utilities' rates as well as 17 notifying utilities that this portion of their rates should be considered interim subject 18 to refund until the Commission has the opportunity to review the reasonableness of 19 20 the utilities' rates on a comprehensive and case-by-case basis and confirming that the Commission intends to capture the reduction in Accumulated Deferred Income 21 Tax ("ADIT") balances that will occur in the event that a lower corporate federal 22

1		income tax rate takes effect, over time, in a manner that comports with Internal
2		Revenue Services ("IRS") Tax Normalization Rules.
3		
4	Q.	Did CURB express support for Staff's motion to open a general investigation?
5	А.	Yes. On December 22, 2017 – the same day the Tax Cut and Jobs Act was signed into law
6		- CURB filed a response in support of Staff's motion to open a general investigation
7		regarding tax reform, determining that Staff's motion was both reasonable and in the best
8		interest of Kansas residential and small commercial ratepayers.
9		
10	Q.	Please describe the Commission's Order opening this general investigation.
11	А.	On January 18, 2018, the Commission issued its Order Opening General Investigation and
12		Issuing Accounting Authority Order Regarding Federal Tax Reform ("Order"). In said
13		Order the Commission made the following findings and conclusions:
14		a. The TCJA has the potential to significantly reduce the cost of service for
15		many utilities operating in Kansas since tax expenses are recovered in rates.
16		b. A significant reduction to the corporate tax rate may also impact the ADIT
17		Liabilities and Assets on the regulated books of utilities.
18		c. An investigation into the impact of the TCJA on utility rates is warranted.
19		d. The 1987 Order issued by the Commission relating to the effects of the
20		Federal Tax Reform Act of 1986, is informative but not precedential.
21		e. The purpose of the investigation is to quantify the economic impacts of the
22		new lower tax rates on Kansas utilities, and where appropriate, direct that any cost
23		savings be passed on to Kansas utility customers.

1	f. All regulated public utilities that are taxable at the corporate level are
2	directed to accrue monthly, in a deferred revenue account, the portion of its
3	revenues representing the difference between (1) the cost of service approved by
4	the Commission in its most recent rate case; and (2) the cost of service that would
5	have resulted had the provision for federal income taxes been based upon the
6	corporate income tax rate approved in the TCJA.

7 g. Taxable utilities operating in Kansas are notified that the portion of their
8 regulated revenue stream that reflects higher corporate tax rates should be
9 considered interim and subject to refund, with interest calculated at the rate being
10 used for interest paid on customer deposits, until the Commission can more fully
11 evaluate on a case-by-case basis the impact of the TCJA.

h. Upon the Commission completing its case-by-case evaluation, if it is
determined that a rate decrease is proper and would have been proper as of the
January 1, 2018, being the effective date of the TCJA, any excessive collections in
the deferred revenue subaccount, or other appropriate tracking mechanism
approved by the Commission, with appropriate adjustments, shall be refundable to
customers with interest. Any balance remaining in the account shall be credited to
the utility's operating revenue.

i. The Commission intends to capture excess ADIT for the benefit of
customers using a methodology that is consistent with the tax normalization
requirements specified in the tax legislation or IRS Tax Normalization Rules, as
applicable.

1		j. Any affected utility that believes other components of their cost of service
2		have more than offset the decrease in its income tax expenses will have the ability
3		to file such information and supporting data with the Commission, to be considered
4		on a case-by-case basis. The Commission's intention here is not to materially
5		impact any regulated utilities' profitability, but rather, ensure that the affected
6		utilities are neither positively nor negatively impacted by the passage of federal
7		income tax reform.
8		k. The Commission adopts the Staff's December 14, 2017 report and
9		recommendation and incorporates it into the Order.
10		
11	III.	DESCRIPTION OF THE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT
	0	
12	Q.	Please describe the provisions of the Agreement.
12 13	Q. A.	The Agreement, in agreement with the Commission's order, provides the following:
13		The Agreement, in agreement with the Commission's order, provides the following:
13 14		 The Agreement, in agreement with the Commission's order, provides the following: Empire will accrue in a regulatory liability, the difference between: (1) the cost of
13 14 15		 The Agreement, in agreement with the Commission's order, provides the following: Empire will accrue in a regulatory liability, the difference between: (1) the cost of service as approved by the Commission in its most recent rate case, Docket No. 11-
13 14 15 16		 The Agreement, in agreement with the Commission's order, provides the following: Empire will accrue in a regulatory liability, the difference between: (1) the cost of service as approved by the Commission in its most recent rate case, Docket No. 11-EPDE-856-RTS ("856 Docket"), and (2) the cost of service that would have resulted
13 14 15 16 17		 The Agreement, in agreement with the Commission's order, provides the following: Empire will accrue in a regulatory liability, the difference between: (1) the cost of service as approved by the Commission in its most recent rate case, Docket No. 11-EPDE-856-RTS ("856 Docket"), and (2) the cost of service that would have resulted had the provision for federal taxes been based upon the corporate income tax rate
13 14 15 16 17 18		 The Agreement, in agreement with the Commission's order, provides the following: Empire will accrue in a regulatory liability, the difference between: (1) the cost of service as approved by the Commission in its most recent rate case, Docket No. 11-EPDE-856-RTS ("856 Docket"), and (2) the cost of service that would have resulted had the provision for federal taxes been based upon the corporate income tax rate approved in the TCJA, including the impact of the TCJA on Empire's Asbury
13 14 15 16 17 18 19		 The Agreement, in agreement with the Commission's order, provides the following: Empire will accrue in a regulatory liability, the difference between: (1) the cost of service as approved by the Commission in its most recent rate case, Docket No. 11-EPDE-856-RTS ("856 Docket"), and (2) the cost of service that would have resulted had the provision for federal taxes been based upon the corporate income tax rate approved in the TCJA, including the impact of the TCJA on Empire's Asbury Environmental and Riverton Rider ("AERR"), plus interest. For the period of January
13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20		 The Agreement, in agreement with the Commission's order, provides the following: Empire will accrue in a regulatory liability, the difference between: (1) the cost of service as approved by the Commission in its most recent rate case, Docket No. 11-EPDE-856-RTS ("856 Docket"), and (2) the cost of service that would have resulted had the provision for federal taxes been based upon the corporate income tax rate approved in the TCJA, including the impact of the TCJA on Empire's Asbury Environmental and Riverton Rider ("AERR"), plus interest. For the period of January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018, the Company will accrue in a regulatory liability

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the Commission in its final order at the completion of Empire's next general rate case filing.

3 Empire reserves its right to utilize the provision in the Order that allows the utility the • ability to file information and supporting data in the upcoming rate case to prove the 4 tax savings amount accrued as a regulatory liability should be reduced or offset by other 5 components before determining whether any amount should be credited to customers. 6 Empire will file a general rate case no later than 150 days from the date of the 7 8 Commission's order approving the Agreement to show that other components of its cost of service offset the decrease in the income tax expense that is being accrued as a 9 regulatory liability. Staff and CURB reserve their rights to challenge any effort made 10 by Empire during its next general rate case to offset the decrease in Empire's income 11 tax expenses during the accrual period. 12

Empire will establish a regulatory liability to account for and capture the savings 13 • relating to excess ADIT for the benefit of customers using a methodology that is 14 consistent with the tax normalization requirements specified in the tax legislation or 15 IRS normalization rules. As part of this Agreement, parties have agreed to defer any 16 issues regarding the amount of tax savings relating to excess ADIT and how those 17 18 savings should be passed on to customers to Empire's next general rate case filing, with the understanding that Empire's customers are entitled to the benefits of the tax savings 19 20 relating to the utility's excess ADIT.

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1	Q.	Do the terms of this agreement conform to the Commission's findings and conclusions
2		in this general investigation?
3	A.	Yes. The Agreement contains several provisions that are consistent with the Commission's
4		Order.
5		
6	Q.	Are the terms of this Agreement binding upon Staff, CURB or the Commission?
7	A.	No. The terms in the Agreement are only applicable to Empire tax refund plan
8		and shall not be binding on Staff, CURB or the Commission in reviewing or approving any
9		TCJA tax refund plan submitted by any other public utility.
10		
11	IV.	CURB'S COMPLAINT IN DOCKET NO. 18-GIMX-273-COM
12	Q.	Can you describe the complaint filed by CURB in Docket No. 18-GIMX-273-COM
12 13	Q.	Can you describe the complaint filed by CURB in Docket No. 18-GIMX-273-COM ("Complaint")?
	Q. A.	
13		("Complaint")?
13 14		("Complaint")? Yes. On December 29, 2017, CURB filed a complaint against all regulated electric, natural
13 14 15		("Complaint")? Yes. On December 29, 2017, CURB filed a complaint against all regulated electric, natural gas, water and telecommunications public utilities operating in Kansas (identified in Staff's
13 14 15 16		("Complaint")? Yes. On December 29, 2017, CURB filed a complaint against all regulated electric, natural gas, water and telecommunications public utilities operating in Kansas (identified in Staff's December 14, 2017 report and recommendation in this proceeding). CURB's complaint
13 14 15 16 17		("Complaint")? Yes. On December 29, 2017, CURB filed a complaint against all regulated electric, natural gas, water and telecommunications public utilities operating in Kansas (identified in Staff's December 14, 2017 report and recommendation in this proceeding). CURB's complaint was filed prior to the Commission's Order in this proceeding. It expressed a concern that,
13 14 15 16 17 18		("Complaint")? Yes. On December 29, 2017, CURB filed a complaint against all regulated electric, natural gas, water and telecommunications public utilities operating in Kansas (identified in Staff's December 14, 2017 report and recommendation in this proceeding). CURB's complaint was filed prior to the Commission's Order in this proceeding. It expressed a concern that, absent a Commission directive requiring utilities to amend tariffs prospectively to reflect
13 14 15 16 17 18 19		("Complaint")? Yes. On December 29, 2017, CURB filed a complaint against all regulated electric, natural gas, water and telecommunications public utilities operating in Kansas (identified in Staff's December 14, 2017 report and recommendation in this proceeding). CURB's complaint was filed prior to the Commission's Order in this proceeding. It expressed a concern that, absent a Commission directive requiring utilities to amend tariffs prospectively to reflect the cost of service reduction caused by the TCJA, some could argue that it is unlawful to

1		same order also directed Staff to investigate the matter and submit a report and
2		recommendation to the Commission.
3		On March 16, 2018, CURB filed a motion to dismiss the complaint without
4		prejudice against certain respondents. CURB's motion to dismiss its complaint against six
5		investor-owned utilities, including Empire, was a reflection that five of the six investor-
6		owned utilities have entered into settlement agreements, or are in the process of negotiating
7		a settlement agreements, concerning the treatment of tax reductions arising out of the
8		TCJA. The Commission approved CURB's motion to dismiss on March 29, 2018.
9		
10	Q.	Does this Agreement resolve CURB's concerns as stated in its original Complaint?
11	A.	Yes.
12		
12 13	V.	EVALUATION OF SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS
	V. Q.	EVALUATION OF SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS Are you familiar with the standards used by the Commission to evaluate a settlement
13		
13 14		Are you familiar with the standards used by the Commission to evaluate a settlement
13 14 15	Q.	Are you familiar with the standards used by the Commission to evaluate a settlement that is proposed to the Commission?
13 14 15 16	Q.	Are you familiar with the standards used by the Commission to evaluate a settlement that is proposed to the Commission? Yes, I am. The Commission has adopted five guidelines for use in evaluating settlement
13 14 15 16 17	Q.	Are you familiar with the standards used by the Commission to evaluate a settlement that is proposed to the Commission? Yes, I am. The Commission has adopted five guidelines for use in evaluating settlement agreements. These include: (1) has each party had an opportunity to be heard on its
13 14 15 16 17 18	Q.	Are you familiar with the standards used by the Commission to evaluate a settlement that is proposed to the Commission? Yes, I am. The Commission has adopted five guidelines for use in evaluating settlement agreements. These include: (1) has each party had an opportunity to be heard on its reasons for opposing the settlement? (2) is the agreement supported by substantial
13 14 15 16 17 18 19	Q.	Are you familiar with the standards used by the Commission to evaluate a settlement that is proposed to the Commission? Yes, I am. The Commission has adopted five guidelines for use in evaluating settlement agreements. These include: (1) has each party had an opportunity to be heard on its reasons for opposing the settlement? (2) is the agreement supported by substantial evidence in the record as a whole? (3) does the agreement conform to applicable law? (4)
13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	Q.	Are you familiar with the standards used by the Commission to evaluate a settlement that is proposed to the Commission? Yes, I am. The Commission has adopted five guidelines for use in evaluating settlement agreements. These include: (1) has each party had an opportunity to be heard on its reasons for opposing the settlement? (2) is the agreement supported by substantial evidence in the record as a whole? (3) does the agreement conform to applicable law? (4) will the agreement result in just and reasonable rates? (5) are the results of the agreement

1	Q.	Has each party had an opportunity to be heard on its reasons for opposing the
2		Settlement Agreement?
3	A.	Yes. Settlement discussions were conducted with Empire, Staff, and CURB on February
4		7, 2018 and again on May 14, 2018. There were no other parties present during either
5		discussion. Because all issued were resolved as a part of the February 7, 2018, and May
6		14, 2018 settlement discussions, this factor has been met as all parties with an interest in
7		Empire's TCJA tax savings plan were present, were heard, and were able to participate.
8		
9	Q.	Is the Settlement supported by substantial evidence in the record as a whole?
10	A.	Yes. There is substantial evidence in the record to support the Agreement. The calculation
11		of the monthly accrual was performed using Empire's most recent base rate case (Docket
12		No. 11-EPDE-856-RTS), as adjusted for the change in the corporate tax rate change.
13		Additionally, the AERR accrual amounts were calculated using the updated AERR
14		conditions as set forth in Docket No. 16-EPDE-410-ACQ.
15		
16	Q.	Does the agreement conform to applicable law?
17	A.	I am not an attorney, however, it is my understanding that the Agreement has been drafted
18		to ensure it conforms to applicable law. At the request of the Commission, a CURB
19		attorney will provide a response to the question of whether the Agreement does indeed
20		conform to applicable law.
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1	Q.	Will the Settlement Agreement result in just and reasonable rates?
2	A.	Yes. The calculation of Empire's amount to be accrued as a regulatory liability is based
3		upon the Commission-approved rates in Empire's most recent general rate proceeding,
4		which at the time of approval were deemed just and reasonable. Therefore, it is my opinion
5		that Empire's rates will continue to be just and reasonable.
6		
7	Q.	Should the deferral of the excess ADIT until the next general rate case cause Empire's
8		current rates to be deemed unreasonable?
9	A.	In my opinion, no. As part of the Agreement, Empire, Staff and CURB have agreed to defer
10		the excess ADIT issues until Empire's next general rate case. However, Empire will
11		immediately establish a regulatory liability to account for and capture the tax savings that
12		are related to its excess deferred taxes. Further, Empire has agreed that the tax savings
13		captured as a result of excess ADIT will not be amortized until the next base rate case and
14		that these savings will be applied for the benefit of its customers.
15		
16	Q.	Are the results of the Settlement Agreement in the public interest, including the
17		interests of customers represented by any party not consenting to the agreement?
18	A.	Yes. I believe the Agreement is in the public interest.
19		
20	VI.	RECOMMENDATION
21	Q.	What do you recommend?
22	A.	I recommend that the Commission find that all parties had the opportunity to participate

6	Q.	Does this conclude your testimony?
5		
4		that the Commission approve the Settlement as filed.
3		rates, and that the Settlement Agreement is in the public interest. Therefore, I recommend
2		evidence in the record, that the Settlement Agreement will result in just and reasonable
1		in the settlement process, that the Settlement Agreement is supported by substantial

7 A. Yes.

VERIFICATION

STATE OF KANSAS)) ss: COUNTY OF SHAWNEE)

I, Stacey Harden, of lawful age and being first duly sworn upon my oath, state that I am a Senior Regulatory Analyst for the Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board; that I have read and am familiar with the above and foregoing document and attest that the statements therein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

Stacey Harder

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 26th day of June, 2018.

DELLA J. SMITH Notary Public - State of Kansas My Appt. Expires Jan. 26, 2021

Notary Public

My Commission expires: 01-26-2021.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

18-GIMX-248-GIV

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the above and foregoing document was served by electronic service on this 26th day of June, 2018, to the following:

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