

**THE STATE CORPORATION COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF KANSAS**

Before Commissioners: Andrew J. French, Chairperson  
Dwight D. Keen  
Annie Kuether

In the Matter of the Joint Application of the )  
Gas Utilities for a Waiver to the )  
Commission's Electric and Natural Gas )  
Utilities' Billing Standards Related to Allow ) Docket No. 24-GIMG-453-GIG  
for a Permanent Discontinuance of the )  
Knock and Collect Provisions in Said Billing )  
Standards. )

**ORDER GRANTING BLACK HILLS ENERGY'S  
PETITION TO INTERVENE**

This matter comes before the State Corporation Commission of the State of Kansas (Commission) for consideration and decision. Having reviewed the pleadings and record, the Commission makes the following findings:

1. On December 15, 2023, Atmos Energy Corporation (Atmos) and Kansas Gas Service, a Division of ONE Gas, Inc. (KGS) (collectively the Gas Utilities) filed a Joint Application to Discontinue the Knock and Collect Provisions in the Commission's Billing Standards. The Billing Standards require utility companies to attempt face-to-face contact (knock & collect) with customers before disconnecting service.<sup>1</sup>

2. On August 17, 2017, the Commission approved a 3-year waiver of the Knock and Collect provisions for Southern Pioneer Electric Company (Southern Pioneer) and Westar Energy, Inc.<sup>2</sup> On July 14, 2020, the Commission added KGS to the 3-year waiver.<sup>3</sup> On September 24,

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<sup>1</sup> Staff Report and Recommendation, Docket No.15-GIMX-344-GIV, Nov. 2, 2016, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Order Approving Pilot Program, Docket No. 15-GIMX-344-GIV, Aug. 17, 2017, ¶¶ 17-19. Westar is now Evergy Kansas Central.

<sup>3</sup> Order Granting Motion to be Added to Pilot Program, Docket No. 15-GIMX-344-GIV, July 14, 2020, Ordering Clause A.

2020, the Commission added Atmos to the 3-year waiver.<sup>4</sup> On February 4, 2021, the Commission gave permanent waivers to both Southern Pioneer and Evergy Kansas Central,<sup>5</sup> but declined to give the Gas Utilities permanent waivers.<sup>6</sup> However, the Commission allowed the Gas Utilities to continue substituting physical interaction between employees and customers with additional notices by phone and text messages on an interim basis.<sup>7</sup> The Commission also allowed the Gas Utilities to seek a permanent waiver of the knock and collect requirement after conferring with the Commission Staff (Staff) and the Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board (CURB).<sup>8</sup> After conferring with Staff and CURB, the Gas Utilities filed their Joint Application in this Docket.<sup>9</sup>

3. On January 30, 2024, Black Hills/Kansas Gas Utility Company, LLC d/b/a Black Hills Energy (Black Hills) filed a Petition to Intervene in Support of Application, explaining that as a natural gas utility that operates in Kansas, and is subject to the Billing Standards, it may be substantially impacted by this Docket.<sup>10</sup>

4. The Commission has broad discretion to grant a petition for intervention if it is in the interest of justice, if the intervention will not impair the orderly and prompt conduct of the proceedings, and if the party has stated facts demonstrating its legal rights, duties and privileges, immunities or other legal interests may be substantially affected by the proceeding.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, at any time during a proceeding, the Commission may impose limitations on an intervenor's participation.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Order Granting Motion to be Added to Pilot Program, Docket No. 15-GIMX-344-GIV, Sept. 24, 2020, Ordering Clause A.

<sup>5</sup> Order on Knock and Collect Pilot Program, Docket No. 15-GIMX-344-GIV, Feb. 4, 2021, ¶ 26.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*, Ordering Clause B.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*, ¶ 27.

<sup>8</sup> Joint Application, Dec. 15, 2023, ¶ 1.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*, ¶ 5.

<sup>10</sup> Petition to Intervene in Support of Application, Jan. 30, 2024, ¶ 3.

<sup>11</sup> K.S.A. 77-521; K.A.R. 82-1-225.

<sup>12</sup> K.S.A. 77-521(c).

5. The Commission finds and concludes that Black Hills has met the requirements of K.A.R. 82-1-225 and K.S.A. 77-521(b), and should be granted intervention in this Docket. Black Hills will be added to the mailing list, and electronic service of pleadings, communications, and correspondence should be delivered to counsel of record:

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**THEREFORE, THE COMMISSION ORDERS:**

- A. Black Hills’ Petition to Intervene is granted.
- B. This Order is procedural and constitutes non-final agency action.<sup>13</sup>

**BY THE COMMISSION IT IS SO ORDERED.**

French, Chairperson; Keen, Commissioner; Kuether, Commissioner

Dated: 02/29/2024



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Lynn M. Retz  
Executive Director

BGF

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<sup>13</sup> K.S.A. 77-607(b)(2).

## **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

24-GIMG-453-GIG

I, the undersigned, certify that a true copy of the attached Order has been served to the following by means of electronic service on 02/29/2024.

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