BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF UTAH

In the Matter of: The Application of Rocky Mountain Power for Authority to Increase its Retail Electric Utility Service Rates in Utah and for Approval of its Proposed Electric Service Schedules and Electric Service Regulations.)))))	Docket No: 10-035-124
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TRANSCRIPT OF HEARING PROCEEDINGS

TAKEN AT: Public Service Commission

160 East 300 South Salt Lake City, Utah

DATE: May 12, 2011

TIME: 9:03 a.m.

REPORTED BY: Kelly L. Wilburn, CSR, RPR

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1	MAY 12, 2011 9:03 A.M.
2	<u>PROCEEDINGS</u>
3	HEARING OFFICER: Good morning all.
4	MR. MONSON: Good morning.
5	MS. SCHMID: Morning.
6	HEARING OFFICER: My name is David Clark, and
7	the Commission has designated me as the Hearing
8	Officer for the oral argument this morning.
9	We're convened in Docket No. 10-035-124, In
10	Matter of: The Application of Rocky Mountain Power
11	For Authority to Increase its Retail Electric Utility
12	Service Rates in Utah and for Approval of its Proposed
13	Electric Service Schedules and Electric Service
14	Regulations. Otherwise known as the general rate
15	case.
16	And specifically we're here to address this
17	morning the motion to dismiss, motion to strike, or
18	alternatively, motion to open a separate rulemaking
19	docket filed by the Utah Rural Telecom Association.
20	First we'll take appearances of counsel.
21	We'll begin with the moving party.
22	MR. MECHAM: Good morning. Steve Mecham
23	representing the Utah Rural Telecom Association.
24	MR. OLDROYD: Jerry Oldroyd, attorney at
25	Ballard Spahr, representing Comcast.

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              MS. ISHIMATSU: Barbara Ishimatsu, Rocky
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    Mountain Power.
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             MR. MONSON: Gregory Monson for Rocky
    Mountain Power.
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              MS. SCHMID: Patricia E. Schmid, with the
    Attorney General's Office, for the Division of Public
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 7
    Utilities.
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              HEARING OFFICER:
                                Thank you.
 9
             We have parties on the telephone, I believe,
     as well. Would you please identify yourselves?
10
             MR. SOMERS: Yes. This is Torry Somers,
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12
     senior counsel for CenturyLink, on behalf of Qwest.
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              MS. BERTELSEN: This is Sharon Bertelsen,
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    from Ballard Spahr, on behalf Comcast.
                                Thank you. Will the two of
15
              HEARING OFFICER:
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    you I assume just be monitoring the --
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              MS. BERTELSEN:
                             Yes.
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              HEARING OFFICER: -- arguments?
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              HEARING OFFICER:
                                Okay.
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              MR. SOMERS: I -- this is Torry Somers.
                                                        Ι
21
    might have comments to make in this proceeding.
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              HEARING OFFICER: Okay. Thank you.
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             Are there any preliminary matters before we
    begin the arguments?
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              My intention is to hear first from
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1 Mr. Mecham, and then from others who support the Then to hear from Rocky Mountain Power. 2 And 3 then I'll offer Mr. Mecham an opportunity to make any 4 concluding comments. 5 MS. SCHMID: I believe that perhaps the 6 appropriate place for the Division, since the Division 7 is opposing the motion, would be after Rocky Mountain 8 Power in this process. 9 HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Is there any 10 objection to that process? 11 I don't see any. Thank you, Ms. Schmid. 12 Then that's where we'll proceed. So you'll come just 13 before URTA's final comments. 14 So Mr. Mecham. 15 MR. MECHAM: Thank you very much. 16 response that Rocky Mountain Power made to our motion 17 to dismiss they ascribed motives to URTA for filing 18 this motion. The bottom line is, is that when we 19 began preparing to submit testimony in this matter we 20 realized that we've seen this before. 21 The filings that were made in this rate case 22 are the same filings that were made in 23 Docket 10-035-97, which remains open to consider the 24 pole attachment issue. But this is the third time 25 that Rocky Mountain has tried to change the pole

attachment rate formula.

The issues that are before the Commission in this rate docket were before the Commission in Docket 04-999-03. That's the one that commenced where Rocky Mountain tried to increase the telecommunications pole attachment rate from \$12.50 to \$27.40.

And that proceeding was a lively, lengthy proceeding that went on for more than two years. And the issues that were decided there are principally the same issues that Rocky Mountain Power has presented here in this rate case, with potentially one exception.

But things like whether or not there ought to be pre- and post-construction inspections and how they should be recovered, the Commission already decided that in 04-999-03.

The second time we saw these issues, as I stated before, was in Docket 10-035-97. Same issues. And the Commission ended up suspending that in October. And they left that docket open. That docket, as I said at the outset, remains open to entertain these issues. And they were, I thought, to be addressed in that docket, not in this docket.

Then on January 24th of this year, rather

than proceeding in 10-035-97, Rocky Mountain added the pole attachment issue to this rate case where they filed for a \$232 million increase. And the, again, the proposed tariff sheets appear to be the exact sheets that were filed in 10-035-97.

It's our argument that this is a complete inefficient use of the Commission's time and of the parties' time. That it is -- and in the name of administrative efficiency we brought this motion.

And really the interesting thing is, is that when you calculate the value of this issue, it is minuscule. It would be a rounding error in a rate case for 200 -- seeking \$232 million of new revenues. By my calculations -- and I'm not a mathematician, Mr. Monson is -- it's .00085. I believe that's 8/1000ths of 1 percent of the request that Rocky Mountain is making.

And yet, to the telecommunications industry, this is a huge issue. It has a tremendous impact on whether or -- whether and how infrastructure is put in place, and its price and its value, and the prices that are charged end-use customers. And there clearly are more than just those represented at this table who will be affected by it.

Now, our first priority here is to have this

issue dismissed. If the Commission doesn't feel like it's able to do that, then we would argue that it should be returned to Docket 10-035-97 to determine whether or not there is reason to go forward with the rulemaking.

Because, as I said, this affects a class of people. And while we may have received notice -- and we did -- not everyone did. Whereas the rulemaking process at least establishes the process to try to ensure that that occurs.

And I will say that it was the practice, and frankly it was a rule before the current rule, that this issue not be entertained in a ratemaking proceeding. That it be addressed, by rule, for that very reason.

Now, I know that in its response Rocky
Mountain Power states that Mr. Kent, the pole
attachment witness for Rocky Mountain Power, is going
to correct the statement on line 74 of his testimony
where he referred to it as a rulemaking.

But even if he does that, the fact of the matter is, is that elsewhere in his testimony, as an example lines 29 through 31, he states that he's proposing an additional component to the pole attachment rental rate formula to include

administrative support costs the Company incurs to accommodate the joint use of Rocky Mountain's poles.

Well, the rate formula is established by rule. It was -- it is in R746-345. That is where the formula is. That is going to be done by rulemaking. And even if the Company is -- that is, Rocky Mountain Power is successful here in convincing the Commission that there ought to be some addition to the rate formula, you're still gonna have to go through rulemaking.

So I would argue that that is duplicative, inefficient, and we ought to either -- well, we ought to either move it or dismiss it because there isn't anything really new that they're raising here. And it is their burden, under that rule, to come forward and show that the rates that are in effect are somehow unjust, unreasonable, and not compensatory.

Even the Division -- and I know the Division can speak for itself. But if you look at page 2, while they may oppose this motion, in the last paragraph on page 2 of their response they say:

"The Division recognizes that including pole attachment fee changes in a rate case filing very well may affect other pole owners and users, and thus a

1 rate case may not be the most 2 appropriate forum through which to 3 change pole attachment rates. 4 Commission may wish to open a rulemaking 5 docket in which to address pole 6 attachment issues." 7 Your Honor, I'm not sure why we're here. 8 Now, as I've said probably twice before, the 9 Commission left open Docket 10-035-97 to address these 10 very issues. And they -- these issues ought to be 11 moved to that docket. So that all parties can, in a 12 very methodical way, go through and determine whether 13 or not there's enough reason to change that rule. 14 To do it in this docket it's going to crimp 15 the Commission, it's going to crimp the parties, 16 because you're gonna have to have this done in 17 240 days. I don't think that's fair to either the 18 Commission or to any of the parties here. 19 Now, let me just quickly respond to a couple 20 of the claims that Rocky Mountain Power makes in its 21 Basically Rocky Mountain Power says that response. 22 this proceeding is governed by Title 54-7-12(2)(b)(2), 23 Rule 746-100-1(c) and 4(d) of that same rule, and Utah 24 Rules of Civil Procedure 12(b.) 25 We didn't file this under Rules of Civil

Procedure 12(b.) I actually don't disagree with Rocky Mountain Power with respect to 746-100-1(c.) Where the Commission has not spoken, the Rules of Civil Procedure can apply.

They don't have to. That rule makes it clear that they don't have to. But I brought this -- that is, the Utah Rural Telecom Association brought this issue because we've seen this three times. It's not new. It's repetitive and wasteful.

That's why we brought it. That is reason enough for the Commission to be able to move forward and dismiss it out of hand. Or at least move it to the proper docket rather than this docket.

Secondly, 54-7-12(2)(b)(2), if you look at that statute, that statute addresses whether or not what Rocky Mountain Power filed is a complete filing. We don't take issue with that. That's not applicable here. That -- and they say that we should have filed that within 14 days of the filing at the Commission.

Well, if we had an issue with the complete filing perhaps that were true. But if you look at that carefully it appears to me that, while other parties can raise that issue, it's principally going to be the Division of Public Utilities and the Office of Consumer Services that's going to raise it because

most other parties really aren't gonna be into it within 14 days of filing.

That statute doesn't apply. What I see

happening here is straw men being raised up and knocked down that don't apply. That doesn't apply here. And then, if you take a look at 746-101-4(d),

how does that apply and to what does it apply?

In my judgment based on the way I re

In my judgment, based on the way I read that, that rule, it applies to your garden-variety request for agency action. It takes into account the Administrative Procedures Act in 63G, but it does not apply in a rate case. A rate has always been treated outside of that.

You have a separate 240-day requirement. If, in fact, Rocky Mountain Power is right that this rule applies and that any motion has to be brought in accordance with this rule, then the Commission and the ratepayers of the State of Utah are in trouble.

Because the very last line of that Section D says absent a response or reply, the Commission may presume that there is no opposition.

Well, I perused this docket, 035-124, in the last day or two. There is no response. There is no reply. Why? Because it wasn't treated like a request for agency action. It was treated like a rate case.

And if this is true, if this, if this motion I was to bring was supposed to be brought in accordance with that, it's over. The rate case is over. It doesn't apply.

Motions can be brought at any time. And the

Motions can be brought at any time. And the fact of the matter is is that the rule, while not used that regularly anymore, you could bring motions at any time pending a docket.

And, frankly, they used to be brought on five days notice. And it was done routinely on a Tuesday. But there wasn't enough activity, so it was done on an ad hoc basis. And it apparently has even fallen away from that.

So I would argue, your Honor, that none of those time requirements apply in this case. That Rocky Mountain Power is wrong. That this is brought appropriately. And it is brought appropriately under the correct rule.

That if the Commission goes forward with this, it will be wasteful. And there will be people who are affected who are not here today who should have been notified under the Rulemaking Act. And that concludes my opening statement.

HEARING OFFICER: Couple questions if I may, Mr. Mecham.

MR. MECHAM: Of course. 1 HEARING OFFICER: The rule that you've just 2 3 been discussing, that --4 MR. MECHAM: Right. 5 HEARING OFFICER: That at least parties argue 6 would apply a 30-day time limit, does that apply to a 7 motion to strike testimony, or just a motion to 8 dismiss, in your understanding? 9 MR. MECHAM: I honestly don't think that this 10 applies to general motions. 11 HEARING OFFICER: Uh-huh. 12 MR. MECHAM: This is -- you're talking about 13 motions directed at responsive pleadings. Under the 14 Administrative Procedures Act you have a request for 15 agency action. Anybody interested in it has a 30-day 16 response period. And then there's a reply period to 17 that. 18 That's not how a rate case has ever been 19 conducted. A rate case is opened with the 20 application. The Commission then puts out a notice of scheduling conference. They put -- as they did in 21 22 this case, which occurred I think on February 9th. 23 They set out the times for filing for -- of 24 testimony, as well as an intervention date. All of 25 which occurred here. Really the game would have been

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    played for most intervenors because the intervention
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    date in this case was set for March 31st.
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              The game would have been over under this
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     statute. There were no responses and there were no
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     replies as that is contemplated under the APA of
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     this -- of the Utah statute.
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              HEARING OFFICER: I'd like you to address one
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    other thing if you would. The rule that addresses
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     rental rate formula and method, which is
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    R746-345-5(b), and it has the heading: "Commission
11
    Relief."
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             Would you address the applicability or lack
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     thereof, in your mind, of this provision regarding the
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    opportunity of a pole owner or attaching entity to
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    petition for a change in the rate formula on the basis
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    of a factual showing? How does that apply here, in
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    your mind?
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              MR. MECHAM: And again, is that -- did you
    say it's 4(b)?
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              HEARING OFFICER: It's 746-345-5(b.) Five --
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    4(b), yes. I apologize, I left the 4 out. Thank you.
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              MR. MECHAM: Okay. I think that a pole owner
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     indeed can do that. I think there's no reason why
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    they couldn't. But I think in doing so they would --
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     I believe they'd either have to change the overall
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1 formula. But the burden rests on them to do that, not 2 on me. Not on my client. 3 They've got to put forward the evidence that 4 whatever the rate is today is not compensatory, and 5 that it therefore is unjust and unreasonable. And --6 so yeah, I think that's something available to them. 7 I thought that was what was going to occur in 8 10-035-97, not in a rate case that has to be decided this summer. 9 But they could actually go forward with 10 11 10-035-97 and put that forward. And if they could 12 justify it somehow, then it would be a change in the 13 rate formula in the rule. I believe that's how that 14 works. 15 HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. 16 Mr. Oldroyd? 17 MR. OLDROYD: Thank you very much. We're 18 here today to support Mr. Mecham's motion. And we do 19 it on a couple of grounds, one I think procedural and 20 the other more substantive. Procedurally I'm 21 concerned with the way this docket was set out by 22 doing this in a ratemaking. 23 Section 54-7-12 requires that in a general 24 rate case notice goes to all parties that actually

participated in the last rate case. Well,

unfortunately that doesn't necessarily include parties that are attached to Rocky Mountain Power's poles.

Telecom providers, broadband providers, indeed even cable companies don't necessarily follow rate cases. So I suspect not necessarily -- but, well, let me give you a good example. Comcast found out about this proceeding after it had been filed from a telephone call from Mr. Mecham. Not because we received notice.

We didn't receive notice until February 3rd by an email that was sent out by Rocky Mountain Power announcing that there was going to be a technical conference that might -- that would address these issues.

I'm not certain an Email is adequate notice.

But the biggest concern is, who did that email go to?

Did it go to all parties of interest? And are all

parties of interest represented here?

Parties of interest would be everybody that attaches to their poles. It would be everybody that was in that original, it seems to me, the 03-999-04 docket. Because that included an exhaustive search of filing parties.

And it would probably include broadband companies and telecom companies that are currently

planning on attaching to poles in the near future.

They're not here, potentially. I don't know, maybe they did give notice to the world. But I didn't see it.

And I'm concerned, primarily because we can contrast that to the proceeding that occurred in the 03-999-04 docket, where the Division of Public Utilities made an exhaustive search of parties that were parties of interest.

Those parties of interest were given an opportunity to sit around a desk, sit around a table, and debate each component of that rule. Each component of the rate formula. The Commission sat with the group and made determinations as to what should be included and what shouldn't be included. All parties were represented.

The Division then took the effort to create a proposed rule. That proposed rule was debated by all the parties ad nauseam. And then finally a proposed rule was completed and it was published. And all parties that otherwise wouldn't have received notice then had an opportunity and a 30-day period to comment. The protections of the Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act assured that all parties were included.

The process we have here is not necessarily

inclusive. In fact, given the structure of a rate case, probably ensures that parties out there right now are not even aware that their rates may be increased, or that the business plans they're preparing right now may be wrong because the cost is wrong.

This is a hugely important issue for telecommunications and cable operators. Don't underestimate it. But what did you say it was, .00085 --

MR. MECHAM: That's what I said.

MR. OLDROYD: -- of 1 percent? In the National Broadband Plan the FCC stated that the cost of deploying broadband networks, that 20 percent of that cost is merely getting access to necessary facilities, including poles.

There's a real balancing act here that needs to go forward. And the process, if nothing else, this Commission should ensure that it's fair to all parties of interest here and not just the Utility.

On a substantive basis, however, the burden under the rule requires a factual finding, a factual finding that the existing rates, terms, and conditions are somehow unjust, unreasonable, or not in the public interest.

Part of the problem we have here, that
Mr. Mecham has raised, is that three times those
issues have been in front of the Commission. This is
the third time. It's the same issue. The Commission
has already made decisions on these issues. They
haven't added anything new, and consequently it should
be dismissed.

But it's important I think that you understand that through this whole process that the Commission has -- the only piece of information that was submitted was Mr. Kent's testimony, where he said that certain items are going to settle in account 588. FERC account 588. And those may not -- aren't included in the formula.

There's no showing that the formula itself is unjust and unreasonable, just that perhaps certain accounts -- 588 -- aren't included in that formula. That doesn't go to the issue as to whether the formula itself is fair and reasonable.

This issue was addressed in the rulemaking docket ad nauseam. Go back and look at the testimony. Rocky Mountain Power continually said, Our ratepayers are subsidizing attachers. Nevertheless, the Commission found and adopted the FCC formula and the regulations and rules surrounding that formula because

1 it was compensatory, it was fair, and it was 2 reasonable. 3 That formula hasn't changed. That formula is still in place. There's still a finding that it's 4 5 fair, reasonable, and just, by virtue of the fact that 6 it was adopted in the rule. 7 What's happening here is Qwest now is trying 8 to change that rule. They're claiming it's not rulemaking, but it certainly is changing the rule. 9 10 It's changing the formula without the benefit of the 11 Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act. 12 But the determination -- the findings of the 13 Commission, by including the FCC formula, bring into 14 bear literally a 31-year history with the cable 15 formula. The FCC orders, from the initial fee order 16 to the order for reconsideration, cases in District 17 Court, Appellate Court, and even a U.S. Supreme Court 18 case has demonstrated and shown that the current formula, the cable formula, is fair and reasonable. 19 20 It is compensatory. 21 Section 224 of the Communication Act creates 22 a zone of reasonableness. And anything above incremental cost recovery is reasonable. U.S. Supreme 23 24 Court said that, okay? The rule is fair and

reasonable. There is no indication that there is a

subsidy issue. They've presented no other evidence.

In addition they said there are certain what they call "non-recurring costs" that have been around since 2002 that should now be -- should be included in Schedule 4, and Schedule 4 should be amended.

The fact that this has been around since 2002 is not necessarily justification for including those fees in Schedule 4. In fact, what it is demonstrates the fact that they simply ignored the Commission's directive on, I believe it was September 6, 2005 -- I think you probably have a copy of that -- where the Commission said, clearly said, the Utility can recover an application fee.

They can recover make-ready fees, and they can recover unauthorized pole attachment fees.

Unauthorized pole attachments fees, back rent from the time of the last audit, plus \$25 a pole. And other fees, like inspection fees, post inspection fees, they believed were included in the pole rental rate.

What they're asking to do is to over-recover. In fact, if you look at Mr. Kent's testimony and put it in line with that September 6th letter, Mr. Kent has demonstrated that Rocky Mountain Power has been overcharging and over-recovering. Instead of changing Schedule 4 what we ought to be doing is compelling

them to refund those amounts to all attachers since the effective date of that rule.

I think it's also important to understand that, notwithstanding the fact that this appears to be a relatively minor change adding this new category, it fundamentally changes the whole nature of pole attachments. It fundamentally makes the formula that's been adopted by this Commission meaningless.

Let me explain that. Rocky Mountain Power says that there are two accounts: A joint use administrative cost, and a GIS licensing support cost, that settle to account 588. FERC account 588.

FERC account 588 is not included in the formula, therefore it must mean that there is a subsidy issue where ratepayers are subsidizing attachers. The problem with that is they have looked at this in the best light for themselves. They've gone back and they've looked at what's out there and they've said, Gee whiz, we're not -- we may not be recovering this.

But Mr. Kent made no attempt, Rocky Mountain Power has made no attempt to disaggregate other accounts. Accounts like 593. Accounts like, I think it's 634. Where there are expenses, based on what the FCC has said, that have no nexus at all as pole

attachments.

What they're asking us to do, if we're -- in fairness if we're going to include those accounts, the 588 account, we need to go back and disaggregate all those other accounts and pull out all expenses that shouldn't apply to attachers so there's a nice matching here.

That's been raised before at the FCC level. And it's been uniformly rejected by the FCC because they felt that Congress wanted a very simple, verifiable, easy approach to ratemaking -- to pole attachments.

They wanted -- and it may not be an exact science, but the FCC has included accounts that they feel would recover, and fully recover, the expenses of the Utility.

Fact, time after time, if you look at the motion to re -- the reconsideration motion, the utilities have tried to include additional administrative expenses. Each time the Commission has said administrative expenses, a lot of those are already covered in the formula through the components of the formula itself. Particularly operating expenses.

To do this would -- what Rocky Mountain Power

1 is asking would require a rate case within a rate 2 Where each of those accounts -- items included 3 in those accounts would have to be scrutinized. 4 eliminates the whole purpose of the formula. 5 eliminates the whole purpose of the rulemaking. 6 So yes, we agree with Mr. Mecham this should 7 be dismissed. For no other reason we should assure 8 that all parties of interest (inaudible - speaking too 9 softly.) 10 THE REPORTER: (Asked Counsel to speak up.) 11 MR. OLDROYD: We should ensure all parties of 12 interest, the parties that are attaching to these 13 poles, that they have a voice. That they're included. 14 Thank you. 15 HEARING OFFICER: Thank you Mr. Oldroyd. 16 Is there anyone else who is supportive of the 17 motion of the Rural Telecom Association who hasn't 18 spoken yet? 19 MR. SOMERS: Yes. This is Torry Somers on 20 behalf of Qwest, and I do have some comments. First, 21 with respect to comments made by Mr. Oldroyd, I think 22 there -- just to clarify one point for the record. At 23 one point Mr. Oldroyd I think inadvertently said that 24 Qwest wanted to change the rate formula. 25 I think it's clear obviously from Mr. Oldroyd

1 and contrast argument that he meant to say Rocky 2 Mountain Power, and I just wanted to clarify that 3 first for the record. 4 MR. OLDROYD: Thank you. 5 MR. SOMERS: Next -- I do not want to repeat 6 what Mr. Mecham has already stated, so I will be 7 But Qwest agrees with the Rural Telecom 8 Association that pole attachment issues from Rocky 9 Mountain's rate case should be dismissed from this 10 proceeding. 11 In the past the formula was set as part of a 12 rulemaking docket. This allows for a consistent 13 formula for all pole owners, yet at the same time 14 recognizes that each owner may have different inputs. 15 Rocky Mountain does not want to merely change 16 an input to the established pole attachment formula. 17 Rather, Rocky Mountain seeks to change the underlying 18 formula. Rocky Mountain's proposal to change the 19 underlying formula, if approved, will create 20 inconsistencies in the formula used for different pole 21 attachment owners, which is contrary to the purpose of 22 creating the formula as part of a rulemaking in the 23 first place. 24 Rocky Mountain has given no indication

whether they believe that their proposed formula, if

approved, should be applied to other pole owners. And has given no indication whether they will reciprocate and pay pole attachment rates based on its proposed formula where they are simply an attacher, not an owner.

Although inputs to the formula will be different for the different pole owners, regardless of what happens in this proceeding the formula should remain consistent for all pole attachment owners. Given the importance of having a consistent pole attachment formula, the most appropriate place to deal with such issues is in a rulemaking, as suggested by others.

However, given that these issues and the appropriateness of the formula has been dealt with in the past few years, as stated by Mr. Mecham and Mr. Oldroyd, we don't believe there's even a need to review these issues again at this time.

Lastly, the Hearing Officer asked a question about the ability for a party to file a petition for deviation. However, this is not what Rocky Mountain has done. Instead, they have simply included this rate increase in a future test year, without even seeking a petition and obtaining approval to deviate from the existing rule. Thank you.

HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Mr. Monson? MR. MONSON: Thank you. Mr. Mecham was arguing about what the basis of his motion was. was trying to gather from his comments and from his filing what the basis of the motion was. Now, we assumed that maybe it was incomplete filing because they said the evidence was inadequate and so forth. And if they're saying that's not the basis, then fine, that's not an issue. But there's gotta be There's gotta be a legal basis for this a basis. motion.

A lot of the discussion today has suggested that maybe the legal basis is res judicata or collateral estoppel or something. I mean, we've heard this three times. I mean, the legal nomenclature for that is res judicata or collateral estoppel. But they know they can't make that argument because in ratemaking there is no res judicata or collateral estoppel.

A company, in every rate case, brings up every cost. And every cost it has is at issue in every rate case. So there's no, there's no *collateral estoppel*, there's no *res judicata*. So they, they don't go quite to the point of saying, That's our basis for this motion.

So what is the basis? Well, the basis is they filed a motion to dismiss. A motion to dismiss when it's filed at the pleading stage, which is where we are, is a motion under Rule 12(b)(6.) Now, you may not want to classify it that way, but that's what it is.

And for a motion of that nature to be granted the moving party has to show that the Applicant would not be entitled to the relief they seek given the facts plead in the complaint or the application, assuming they're all true and that reasonable inferences from those facts are true.

They haven't even attempted to do that here because they can't do it. Because we have put forth facts that show that if they're accepted as true, that this rate is not appropriate, that it's not just and reasonable, and that it should be changed. So there's no basis to grant the motion to dismiss. And that alone is a reason it should be denied.

What they're really arguing is they're arguing that we're gonna lose. We can't prove -- we can't meet our burden of proof. We can't show that there should be a deviation from the rule. We can't do all these things.

Well, those are issues that go to the merits

of the issue. Those are the issues you raise in testimony and in argument on the merits of the issue. You don't raise them in a motion to dismiss. They aren't appropriate reasons to dismiss the matter.

And there's also been a lot of argument about the evidence that -- about the formula remaining consistent, other things. That's all gonna be a very interesting debate. And I appreciate the fact that we now have a lot of notice about what issues we're gonna have to deal with, but those are not issues for a motion to dismiss.

Instead of trying to demonstrate that our complaint -- or our application is deficient as a matter of law, we're having this argument that we've heard this all before. We've had it in three cases. Or this is the third time. Two cases previously. And that it would be administratively inefficient to do it again.

I -- Mr. Oldroyd characterized that prior proceeding as -- twice as being an ad nauseam proceeding. Perhaps he thinks it would be more administratively efficient to go through an ad nauseam proceeding for two years to count the number of angels that can stand on the head of a pin, as opposed to dealing with this straightforwardly in a simple rate

case.

I mean, Mr. Kent's testimony is five pages long. He's filed a couple of exhibits. He's filed one numerical exhibit. The exhibit's very similar to the exhibit that was filed when the rate was put into effect after that prior proceeding.

It's not gonna take a huge amount of effort to deal with this. And whether it does or not, that's not the issue. The issue is, this is a change in rates, and it should be dealt with in a rate case.

The Company is seeking a rate change, and a general rate case is certainly the appropriate place to do that. We're not seeking an amendment to the rule. And rulemaking, therefore, is not an appropriate place, an appropriate place to consider this issue.

We're asking for, as you noted, we're asking for a deviation from the formula. And frankly, as one who's not -- who hasn't been through all this ad nauseam process, I'm not even sure we need to ask for a deviation. Because the rule says you can include administrative -- general and administrative expenses in your charge.

That's what we want to do. Apparently in the course of this lengthy proceeding there was some

to, and so Rocky Mountain Power has candidly acknowledged that it wants to include some administrative and general expenses that weren't within those accounts, that were discussed.

But those accounts aren't set forth in this rule, so I'm not even sure we're really seeking a deviation from the rule. But let's assume we are because we've said we are.

But that's -- a deviation from the rule is not asking for a new rule. We're not asking to amend the formula. We're doing exactly what is provided in R746-345-5(b), we're asking for Commission relief from the rate formula.

The one thing I think that is clear -- that rule doesn't say where we're supposed to seek that relief. But I think one thing is clear, and that is you don't seek that relief in a rulemaking proceeding because you're not asking to amend the rule.

And if you want to change rates, the rate that was set for -- under this formula was not set in a rulemaking. It wasn't set in the rulemaking, it was set in a rate filing. Tariff filing. That's the only place you can do it. Rulemakings aren't for setting rates.

Comcast has raised issues about notice.

Well, it's apparent that the Company, the Division,
and the Commission have attempted to provide notice to
all interested parties. There have been efforts to
give notice to pole attachers, to telecom companies.

But one thing that's clear in all this is that Comcast
and the Utah Rural Telecom Association have had
notice.

They're the parties that are here. And Qwest. And they're the parties that are here arguing. They've had notice. They know about this proceeding. They have participated. They came to the scheduling conference. They have filed a motion and a response to the motion. They know about it, so they don't have any basis to complain about notice.

And just one other issue, and that's on the timing issue. Again, the 14 days doesn't apply because they're not asking that the application be dismissed because it's incomplete. But what they're doing is they're asking for the, they're asking for the application to be dismissed. Not the whole application but a part of the application.

Now, Mr. Mecham has said that that's -- rate cases are different. They fall outside the rules.

What if a party thought a rate case was totally

inappropriate for some reason and was not justified, maybe based on a stipulation or something. When could they file that motion?

Could they wait for three months until their testimony was due and then say, Oh, gosh, you know, we just realized this is -- this case shouldn't have been filed, it should have been dismissed?

No, the rule is very clear. The rule is, if you have a motion in response to an initiatory pleading you have to file that within 30 days. You can get an extension of the 30 days if you ask for it, but otherwise you have to file it within the time allowed by the rule.

And there's nothing unique about rate cases. I mean, we acknowledged in our filing that we aren't, we aren't claiming that parties have to raise every objection to every proposed adjustment within 30 days. But if they want to dismiss the application, they have to do that. And that's a jurisdictional issue. You have to file it within 30 days.

And I think, I think the Commission ought to think about the kind of precedent this would establish. If a party can wait until two weeks before their testimony is due, several months after an application is filed, and at that point suddenly say,

You know, we don't want to file testimony. We want to dismiss the matter.

What kind of precedent does that establish for future cases? Doesn't that open the door for parties to be dilatory in their approach to a case, and to come in at the last minute and raise those kind of issues?

So we think as a matter of law this motion is not well taken and it should be denied. We recognize there's going to be issues on facts and policy that will be addressed in the case. But they should be addressed in this case, and this is the appropriate place to do it. Thank you.

HEARING OFFICER: Mr. Monson, would you address the comments you made about the time limits of the motion in relation to the motion to strike, as distinct from the motion to dismiss?

MR. MONSON: Yeah. As you noticed in our pleading we didn't address the motion to strike because we felt like there was no argument directed at that motion. But we have thought about it. And the motion to strike, I mean, a motion to strike testimony can be filed whenever the testimony is filed.

I mean, you wouldn't file a motion to strike testimony on rebuttal until after the rebuttal

testimony is filed. I don't think, I don't think the 30-day period applies to that, okay? But there is a little bit of Commission guidance in the past.

I've had the experience of filing a motion to strike and having the Commission tell me, You were too late. And what that circumstance was, was a party filed surrebuttal testimony about ten days or two weeks in advance of a hearing. The Utility in that case, Questar Gas, filed a motion to strike that testimony only three days in advance of the hearing.

And the Commission felt like that was unfair to the party who had, who had filed the testimony, which was the Office of Consumer Services, and so therefore denied it because it was untimely. And suggested that, at least for the Utility, if you want to file a motion to strike you better do it promptly. So that parties know and have an opportunity to deal with it before the hearing.

That's the only guidance I'm aware of. But I don't think a motion to strike has to be filed within 30 days.

HEARING OFFICER: Thank you.

Ms. Schmid. And let me apologize for overlooking the Division, and you personally. I didn't intend to do that. And so thank you for

speaking up at that moment.

MS. SCHMID: You're welcome. The Division is walking a tightrope in this case, frankly. The Division has not taken a position on the merits of the pole attachment request and how that request dovetails with the pole attachment proceeding that was truly lengthy and ad nauseam.

So the Division here is addressing the process, not the merits of the pole attachment arguments. It's important to remember that the Division has a unique perspective and unique responsibilities and obligations.

The Division informs the Commission. It makes recommendations regarding public utility policy. It makes recommendations on applications, such as rate cases, the one before us in this docket. And it makes recommendations and comments on rulemaking.

The Division must act in the public interest.

The public interest says -- the public interest is composed of many elements. Just to name a couple:

The public interest should and must promote the safe, healthy, and financial interest of the public utility. Public interest must provide for just and reasonable rates. Public interest must make the process as transparent as possible.

1 So the Division is in a unique situation. 2 The docket that brings us here with the pole 3 attachment issue raised is also a unique situation. 4 In my memory, I have not experienced pole attachment 5 issues being heard in a rate case. And so it is, as 6 the telecom parties have said, it is a different world 7 for them. 8 But the Division noted that in its 9 January 26, 2011, memorandum to the Commission, in 10 which the Division stated: 11 "A cursory review of the filing 12 revealed proposed changes to the 13 Company's pole attachment rate; 14 therefore, the Division requests that 15 the scheduling conference notice include 16 a reference to this proposed change. 17 And, in addition to the regular service 18 list, that the notice be sent to a 19 general telecom list." And as said, obviously actual notice, if not 20 21 paper notice, has been received by some of the 22 parties. Okay, so turning back to the uniqueness of 23 24 this within a rate case. As we all know, in a rate 25 case the Utility takes its expenses, it takes its

revenues, figures out what it needs for a revenue requirement, including cost of capital, and then makes a request.

In this case Rocky Mountain Power is asking for a large rate increase, approximately 232 million. And yes, the \$200,000 ascribed to the pole attachment increase is a small part of that. But it's important to remember that in a rate case there are many adjustments that fall in the 200, 3,000 -- 200 or 300 thousand dollar range, and sometimes even less.

Each part is important. Each part affects everything else. If the motion to dismiss is granted, the Commission just can't stop there. And should not stop there. The Commission must take into account how the effect of such a dismissal would impact other ratepayers.

That would leave a \$200,000 hole in the Company's revenue requirement. And it would leave, unless they were adjusted out, costs associated with those pole attachment issues in.

The Commission would also need to deal with the fact that if it allows an issue to be plucked out at this stage, what the precedent would be. For example, in this rate case the residential customer charge is being proposed to be changed from

approximately \$5 to approximately \$10. Sorry, \$3.75 to \$10.

What would happen if a group of consumers came in and said, This is not the proper place for this, we want to have it taken out? That would leave a big hole in the rate case. And yes, I do understand that there is a specific rule here, but I will note that the rule does allow for Commission relief.

Nonetheless -- and here comes the tightrope part -- the Division is sensitive to the fact that the pole attachment rule docket was the result of a lot of blood, sweat, and tears. The Division is sensitive, too, to the fact that it takes a rulemaking to make changes applicable to a broad class.

Anything decided with regard to pole attachments in this case would apply only to Rocky Mountain Power and those who attach to its poles. It would not automatically, of course, apply to Comcast and those who attach to Comcast's poles. Broader applicability would be obtained through a rulemaking. Or, in the alternative, each pole attacher bringing their own case.

So while the Division is very concerned about removing a particular category and extracting revenues and costs from the rate case, the Division said, as

Mr. Mecham pointed out, that a rulemaking may be the place to decide the issue of general applicability.

URTA also asked the Commission to suspend the testimony filing schedule in this case if the Commission is unable to render a decision on the expedited basis that URTA requested.

Testimony is due Monday on pole attachment issues. Today is the 12th. Mr. Mecham -- I'm sorry. URTA has requested that the testimony schedule be suspended if the Commission is unable to rule in this expedited manner.

Extending the testimony with regard to pole attachment testimony specifically could cause unintended consequences. There are many, many pieces in this rate case. There are layers of testimony. For example, cost of capital testimony was filed yesterday. Pole attachment testimony is due Monday. Later this month revenue requirement testimony is due. And not too far behind, in June, cost of service and rate design testimony is due.

Everything is stacked. Everything is layered. At the scheduling conference so many parties had conflicts it was appearing, at least to me, almost impossible to select a hearing date. Ultimately that was done, with certain parties foregoing or changing

their vacation plans.

If we move the pole testimony part, that affects that as well. And the whole hearing schedule is like a *Jenga* game, with the little wooden rectangles. And if you move one piece, things can happen. Thank you.

HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, Ms. Schmid.

Mr. Monson, I have a question for you regarding the alternative remedy of redirecting or repositioning the issues raised in Mr. Kent's testimony into the existing docket. The other -- the rulemaking docket, for lack of a better term.

What is the prejudice to the Company if the Commission were to take that course?

MR. MONSON: Well, first of all I want to make it clear that we don't think that's a rulemaking docket, but -- because rulemaking and rate changes are very different.

But I guess the main prejudice to the Company is that, as Ms. Schmid just said, that there will be an element of revenue requirement that's extracted out of this case. And so is that prejudice to the Company or is that prejudice to the other customers? I don't know. But it's prejudice.

It's not, it's not appropriate to say, We're

gonna take one element of your case -- we're gonna take one element of your revenue requirement and we're gonna exclude it from the rate case.

I mean, if the Commission is gonna rule that we can file rate increase applications and their

we can file rate increase applications and their impact on our total revenue requirement doesn't matter, maybe we welcome that ruling. But I don't think it's appropriate.

HEARING OFFICER: Is there a distinction between the opportunity that the Company would enjoy to present the costs in the rate case and the method for recovering those costs?

MR. MONSON: I think, I think I can agree that there may be a distinction there. But I want to point out that in many issues of ratemaking it's not just a matter of costs. It's a matter of what accounts do you include. What, you know, how do you account for projections of those accounts, and a variety of issues.

So I don't think this is that different than other rate case issues. One difference is that there's a rule that gives a formula. But the rule says we can ask for a deviation from the formula. And the question is, where do you do that?

Wouldn't be in the rulemaking, but it

might -- it could be in a case -- another case. But it seems like then you'd have to bring it back to a rate case, because if it's gonna change your rate then it affects your revenue requirement. So.

HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Mr. Mecham?

MR. MECHAM: Thank you. Let me just note
that with respect to costs and revenues and so on, and
whether or not they're included in a rate case, that's
a common problem. That's all -- there are always
intervening costs and revenues that occur until the
next rate case.

I don't -- that is ratemaking. That, that is what happens. And the revenues from pole attachments have been included in whatever the most recent rate case was. So that they're not included in this rate case doesn't mean that they won't be included in the next round.

Pole attachments, as I said in my opening statement, hasn't -- this issue has never been addressed in a rate case. And the reason is that, up until this rule, it was prohibited. That's why. And it was prohibited because there are classes affected that don't get notice of the rate case. That's why. It's that simple.

Now, Mr. Monson -- well, and you've raised a

couple of times, your Honor, the motion to strike.

The only reason that I filed a motion to strike is, is because if the Commission were to grant our motion to dismiss it makes no sense to retain the testimony that's dismissed -- or that is the issue that's dismissed from the case, it makes no sense to keep that in the docket.

With respect to what we have to show with

With respect to what we have to show with respect -- insofar as a motion to dismiss is concerned, there are motions that aren't 12(b)(6) motions. And this is administrative rule. That is, it's administrative law.

And the Commission makes it very clear that where the Commission speaks -- which it has on motions -- that supplants the rules. And even if the rules apply, if it doesn't fit, if it's not appropriate, you don't have to apply the rules.

If the Commission has answered the questions that are being asked, and they've done it before, and they were unwilling to address it in 10-035-97, I don't see why they have to do it in this case. Making a motion to dismiss completely appropriate.

I don't understand how Rocky Mountain Power can say this isn't an amendment to a rule. Mr. Kent's testimony makes very clear that they are trying to add

components to the formula. If you're adding components to the formula, you're changing the rule. Whether it results from -- in this rate case, it will subsequently result in a rulemaking.

I also can't understand this time for filing under 746-100-4. Because if a rate case is treated like a garden-variety request for agency action, this assumes that there is an opposing party. How does a utility serve the opposing parties when they don't know who's actually going to intervene? When they don't know who's going to be interested?

This isn't a two-party case. This is a multi-party case, which is why the Commission has treated rate cases separately. You have -- in all -- in my experience, which now exceeds 20 years, I have never seen a response filed to an application to a rate case in the way one would respond to a request for agency action. It doesn't happen.

The application is filed. The Commission notices up a hearing. Interested parties come. And there's an intervention date set. All of that was done in this case. I wasn't served with the application. I've never been served with the application.

What constitutes service under this thing?

This says that an opposing party is to be served with the request for agency action, and thereafter they've got 30 days to respond. And if you have a motion dealing with that pleading you have to deal with it before the responsive testimony is due.

What if you never get served under this statute? Or I mean, excuse me, under this rule. It doesn't work. And the *coup de grâce*, and I've already pointed this out, is if this applies to rate cases, the case is over.

We may as well go home. Because there was no response or reply, period. The Commission, therefore, can presume there's no opposition, and they get their \$232 million.

The opposition occurs in a rate case with the testimony that's filed. This is not a garden-variety request for agency action under the Administrative Procedures Act. Never was intended to be. Never has been treated that way. And shouldn't be treated that way now.

Therefore, nothing I've heard today changes our position. This issue does not belong in a rate case. This issue has been decided. For the life of me, I can't understand why people can't just accept the fact that issues have been decided and move on.

1 The very specific issues have been decided. The 2 Commission has spoken. 3 I understand administrative -- in 4 administrative law you can come back, you can come 5 back, you can come back. But after a while it seems 6 to me like we're spinning wheels, wasting time and 7 resources. 8 I would urge the Commission to dismiss this. 9 And if you can't dismiss it, then I would move it back into 10-035-97. And decide whether or not rulemaking 10 11 is justified. If Mr. Monson doesn't think that's a 12 rulemaking docket, then let's use that docket to 13 decide whether rulemaking is justified. 14 And I would leave it at that. Thank you. 15 HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, Mr. Mecham. 16 The Commission is going to address this 17 motion through a written ruling. It's not gonna be 18 possible to issue that before May 16th. So I want to 19 have all the parties understand that the schedule that 20 was promulgated in the scheduling order on 21 February 23rd is operative. 22 I don't -- I also caution parties not to 23 infer any disposition of the motion as it relates to 24 that schedule. But the schedule is, as several have

noted, complex. And we're only three or four days

1 away from that due date, so we'll need to proceed with 2 the schedule. 3 And the written ruling will be published as 4 soon as it can be prepared. 5 MR. MECHAM: May I ask one thing? 6 HEARING OFFICER: Mr. Mecham. 7 MR. MECHAM: It is true our testimony is due 8 on Monday. This is a dispositive motion, so we 9 stopped working on our testimony. 10 As I recall, the schedule says that our 11 testimony is due May 16th. Rebuttal is June -- is due 12 June 15th. And then I believe surrebuttal is due 13 July 6th. And then the hearing on this is due around 14 July 13th. 15 It is -- with -- well. We didn't file this 16 motion because we thought we would lose. We actually 17 think we can win this issue. But it would -- and I 18 don't think we have to disrupt the schedule that much. 19 But I really do think in order to get the testimony we 20 need I probably need at least until next Thursday or 21 Friday. 22 And I don't see why rebuttal needs to change. 23 In other words, the only thing I would ask for is that we be able to file a few days later. And go forward 24 25 with rebuttal, and go forward with surrebuttal, and go

1 forward with the hearing. 2 Because, you know, as it is, my expert -- and 3 we do have an expert -- but I don't think he's gonna 4 be ready by Monday. 5 HEARING OFFICER: Let's go off the record. (A discussion was held off the record.) 6 7 (A recess was taken from 10:09 to 10:24 a.m.) 8 HEARING OFFICER: We've had a mini scheduling 9 conference off the record and I'm now going to report 10 the results of that. 11 As a result of those conversations the 12 schedule that is presented in a scheduling order 13 issued February 23, 2011, in this docket is amended, 14 with respect to the pole attachment phase, in the 15 following respects: 16 The testimony from parties other than the Applicant, that is, the direct testimony, is now due 17 18 Wednesday, May 18, 2011. And the rebuttal testimony 19 of all parties is now due Thursday, June 16, 2011. 20 And with that announcement I believe we've 21 concluded our business at this hearing. Which was, I 22 should note, duly noticed. And we appreciate the participation of all parties. And we'll be adjourned. 23 24 Thank you. 25 (The hearing was concluded at 10:26 a.m.)

1	CERTIFICATE
2 3 4 5	STATE OF UTAH)) SS. COUNTY OF SALT LAKE) This is to certify that the foregoing proceedings
6 7 8	were taken before me, KELLY L. WILBURN, a Certified Shorthand Reporter and Registered Professional Reporter in and for the State of Utah. That the proceedings were reported by me in stenotype and thereafter caused by me to be transcribed into typewriting. And that a full, true.
9 10	and correct transcription of said proceedings so taken and transcribed is set forth in the foregoing pages, numbered 1 through 51, inclusive.
11 12 13 14	I further certify that I am not of kin or otherwise associated with any of the parties to said cause of action, and that I am not interested in the event thereof. SIGNED ON THIS 23rd DAY OF May, 2011.
15 16 17	Kelly L. Wilburn, CSR, RPR Utah CSR No. 109582-7801
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21 22	
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