

Public Service Commission
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UTAH PUBLIC
SERVICE COMMISSION

2014 SEP -2 A 10:13

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DOCKET NO. 14-030-02

Moon Lake Electric response to Jeff McCollin complaint:

On June 25, 2014 Moon Lake Electric (MLEA) sent Mr. McCollin a letter outlining the circumstances concerning the trees that were trimmed on his property by a contractor of MLEA. We desire now, to re-state those points and to expand on the current information concerning the trees.

1. MLEA takes very seriously our responsibility to maintain safe and reliable power line facilities. The trees on Mr. McCollin's property were in direct contact with the power lines and there was evidence of the trees

burning because of that contact.

2. Normally we attempt to contact the land owner prior to trimming, but this is not always possible, nor are we required to do so. Because Mr. McCollin is not a member of MLEA and receiving electric service,

nor was he a resident of the property, we did not have contact information to notify him.

3. The tree trimming contractor reported to all parties that he did in fact cut a few trees at ground level, but these trees were in his opinion dead or dying. He believed he was performing a favor to the property owner in removing those trees. It would make no sense for MLEA's contractor to trim 100 trees and then cut 15 live trees to the ground. That simply did not happen. (Note Mr. McCollin reported

in his informal complaint to the Utah Division of Public Utilities that 15 trees were cut to the ground. He now claims that number to be 35?)

4. This particular power line has been in place for many years and sometime in the last 10-12 years Mr. McCollin planted the very fast growing willow trees within the power line right of way. The 2014 trimming cycle was the third time in the past six years that MLEA has had to trim these particular trees. MLEA's budget only provides for trimming of the same trees on a five year cycle.

5. The height from the ground to the power line is 25'. In May 2014 the trees were trimmed back to about 8' from the ground. The height of the trees is now 14' from the ground. That represents a growth of 6' in those

three very dry months. At that rate of growth, MLEA will need to trim these trees again in less than three years. That is unacceptable!

6. As was expressed a few weeks ago in a telephone conversation between MLEA's CEO, Grant Earl and Mr. McCollin, our preference would be the complete removal of the trees as they will continue to be a problem and expense to our members. Mr. McCollin also acknowledged that he bought and planted the trees with the understanding that they would not grow into the power lines. He said he was surprised they grew as fast as they did.

7. We are attaching pictures taken in June, July, and August 2014, showing the growth of the trees in

question.

We are also attaching a copy of our vegetation management operating procedure.

8. Mr. McCollin has stated he is a tree trimmer by trade. The most reasonable solution would be for Mr. McCollin to trim these trees away from the power line, at his own expense, maintaining 6' of clearance from the lines. This would allow him to maintain the shape of the trees that he desires while still complying with our Operating Procedure concerning vegetation management.

Finally, after looking at the pictures and reviewing procedures, we do not see anything that has been done, throughout the tree trimming procedure, which is not in keeping with company policy or standard industry practices. We therefore respectfully ask you to dismiss Mr. McCollin's complaint toward Moon Lake Electric.

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Paul W. Betts
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