APPLICATION OF DOMINION ENERGY UTAH

Docket No. 19-057-02

PUBLIC COMMENT PROCEEDINGS

January 15, 2020

ADVANCED REPORTING SOLUTIONS

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BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF UTAH

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Application of Dominion) Do	cket	No:	19-057-02
Energy Utah to Increase)			
Distribution Rates and)			
Charges and Make Tariff)			
Provisions - Phase II)			
)			

PUBLIC COMMENT PROCEEDINGS

Taken on Wednesday, January 15, 2020

At 5:57 p.m.

At the Public Service Commission of Utah 160 East 300 South 4th Floor Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

Reported by: Kimberly A. Harmon, RPR, CSR

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1 PROCEEDINGS

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CHAIRMAN LEVAR: Okay. We will go on the record. We are here for the public witness hearing in Public Service Commission Docket 19-57-2,

Application of Dominion Energy Utah to Increase

Distribution Rates and Make Tariff Modifications.

Before we start the public witness hearing, and I'll note that we're having another streaming difficulty right now. We're not streaming yet, but we have a transcript being made, so that's -- if anyone in the room knows of people who are relying on the stream, the YouTube stream, indicate to me so we can decide if we need to wait another moment or two.

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN LEVAR: I'm not seeing any indication of that.

And before we move into the hearing, we recognize that this is not a proper forum to take any action on the objection that was raised at the end of the meeting, but for your information, we are going to announce our intention to sustain the objection first thing in the morning. And we will explain that further then, but we wanted to announce that

1 intention. 2 I have a sign-up list of six names who intend to testify this morning. We have some more? 3 4 One more? Okay. So we have seven. Why don't we start with Jordan Rolfe. 5 you come to the stand, introduce yourself. Please 6 spell your name for the court reporter, and we will 7 listen to what you have to say. 8 I think with the numbers that we have, we 9 10 don't need to worry about time limits. If things 11 progress to a point that we do, we may address that, 12 but I don't think we'll worry about that at this 13 point. 14 So Mr. Rolfe, am I pronouncing that right? 15 JORDAN ROLFE: You are. Would you like me 16 to come here? Is that --17 CHAIRMAN LEVAR: To this chair right here. 18 And then make sure the green light is on, on the 19 microphone. And make sure it's close to you. 20 JORDAN ROLFE: All right. Thank you. 21 name is Jordan Rolfe, J-O-R-D-A-N, R-O-L-F-E. 22 I am with Olson's Greenhouses. Olson's is a fifth-generation family farm. We supply bedding 23 24 plants to the Walmarts, Home Depots, and big box

stores through most of the Mountain time zone.

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about seven or eight years ago, we switched to TS supply gas. We used a gas supplier, I believe, that was originally out of Texas.

Three or four years ago, we switched and started working with Summit Energy. Summit has helped us in other states, as well, where they don't provide services there, but have helped us to be able to figure it out and be able to do similar things in other states. It's been a huge cost savings for our business. Significant for us. That's our major -- outside of labor, that's our major cost.

You know, there's a couple things. The first one is, for us, the administration fee has always been an area of confusion for us. We have, in Utah, two different sites, but we have multiple meters due to growth. So at one point, you put a meter in, and then as you grow, you put another meter in. And we're paying 30- to \$40,000 in administration fees among two different facilities. But each time we put a meter in -- I don't know exactly what the administration fee goes to, but it doesn't seem like it requires more administration on the supplier -- Dominion's part.

We've asked, kind of, what that covers.

Obviously, it covers the rep who we talk to

occasionally. Many times we're actually referred to Summit when we have questions because they provide our gas and are the ones who are able to answer those questions or help us.

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But the telemetry units are also a lot more money here in Utah than what we pay in Colorado, where we just had to put telemetry units in there.

I guess I would summarize it by saying the process has always been very confusing to us here in We have other relationships with other farmers who use lots of natural gas in the greenhouse industry, but may not be as large as us, who we've tried to kind of help understand the process and figure out whether they can switch or not. And they always have the same issue that we had before we spent a lot of time and investment figuring it out, which is it's really confusing and hard to figure out if they can switch. Do they dare to switch? it's complex and difficult to understand. And the cost is always probably the major factor that -- the entrance costs of putting telemetry units in, and the admin fees.

You know, I think the sole reason I'm here is that we just hope that the Public Service

Commission will look long and hard about whether

there is a necessity to have the barriers that are in 1 2 place now to make it difficult for people to be able 3 to become TS supply customers. A lot of money is 4 saved. We're able to invest in more efficient 5 processes and things in our business that are actually really good for the community when we're 6 able to put the money that we would have spent on 7 administration fees in other states into other 8 9 investments. 10 So that -- you know, that's our feeling. 11 And if you have any questions or if anybody has questions for me, I'm happy to try and answer if you 12 13 do. 14 CHAIRMAN LEVAR: Thank you for your 15 testimony tonight, Mr. Rolfe. 16 And I just want to say, to you and everyone 17 else, thank you for being here. And everyone who's come here this evening, we appreciate your 18 19 willingness to spend some of your evening with us and 20 participate in this process. It improves the 21 transparency of what we do to have these public 22 witness hearings, and so we appreciate hearing your 23 comments. 24 JORDAN ROLFE: Thank you. 25 CHAIRMAN LEVAR: Thank you, Mr. Rolfe.

The next is Mr. Ian McDonald. And then after him is Tom Thorpe.

IAN MCDONALD: Good evening. My name is spelled I-A-N, M-C-D-O-N-A-L-D.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss our thoughts today. Thanks to the commissioners for this opportunity.

I represent Clyde Companies, which is comprised of seven subsidiaries; maybe the most notable of which is Geneva Rock, Sunroc. We operate a number of gravel pits and mining operations here in the state. And then outside of the state, we own insurance company, heavy civil construction, a number of other things, including some land development.

Aside from what Jordan had represented, much of which I agree with in terms of some of the complexity, the administrative costs can be burdensome. As we look to continue to grow, we are also a fifth-generation family-owned company. We've grown substantially over the last couple of decades. And as we have our eye focused on that, our eyes continue to gaze over costs and where those costs reside. And we want to make sure that there's prudence being -- and dealing with some of the costs of natural gas and the administration fees.

The competitive balance is another item 1 2 that -- that I want to make sure is maintained 3 throughout this whole process, that we have options 4 to choose from, and that those options are at least enough so that we can maintain that cost in a 5 meaningful way. 6 Those are -- are the intents of my presence 7 here today, is, again, the cost is very important to 8 9 We want to continue to employ many, many Utahns, us. 10 and then those also outside the state as our 11 operations continue to increase, as well as the 12 competitive balance. I'd welcome any questions or 13 anything else. 14 CHAIRMAN LEVAR: Okay. Thank you. And we 15 typically don't turn these into question and answer 16 sessions, but we appreciate your being with us 17 tonight --18 IAN MCDONALD: Yep. CHAIRMAN LEVAR: -- and to bring perspective 19 20 to this hearing. 21 IAN MCDONALD: Thanks to you all. 22 Next is Tom Thorpe. CHAIRMAN LEVAR: 23 after him will be Joe Bigler. I hope I'm pronouncing 24 the names right. 25 THE WITNESS: T-O-M, T-H-O-R-P-E.

So I'm here representing CRH American

Materials. We've got facilities in Southern Utah,
the trade name Western Rock; Central Utah, Hales Sand
and Gravel; we have Amcor, North Salt Lake,
architectural products; we have Oldcastle
Infrastructure, or it used to be called Precast. Ash
Grove Cement in Leamington, Utah; and then here in
Northern Utah, Staker and Parson Companies. So CRH
is a unique natural gas customer. We utilize natural
gas only if it is cost competitive with alternative
fuel capabilities.

In addition, our load profile is heavily

In addition, our load profile is heavily weighted to a summertime-only usage pattern. This unique load profile affords us the opportunity to manage the risk of all commodity fuel price fluctuations, often due to increased winter demand.

Over the years, CRH has invested capital in plant fuel switching capabilities. This is an investment to manage our cost risk exposure and to never be in a position where we do not have a competitive alternative fuel cost option for our future burner fuel requirements.

CRH does not have the luxury to merely pass through utility rate increases to our customer. We competitively bid commercial and highway projects

that often last years into the future. If we are successful in winning the bid for the project, we are contractually precluded from going back to the customer for relief. As a result, we are unconditionally at risk for the increase proposed by Dominion. This relates not only to the overall rate increase, but more importantly, to Dominion's proposed changes in revenue allocation through rate design.

The delivered cost of natural gas is a very important cost component for the majority of CRH's manufacturing operations in Utah. Dominion's proposed rate increase, whether phased in or not, will significantly increase the current delivered cost of natural gas to our facilities. Depending on the outcome of this rate case, we will decide whether it is economically feasible to remain a natural gas customer on the Dominion system.

CRH believes the Commission should weigh carefully the proposals offered in this rate case. The consequences of your decisions will impact the remaining nonalternative fuel customers of Dominion.

Thanks.

CHAIRMAN LEVAR: Thank you, Mr. Thorpe. We appreciate your being part of our hearing tonight.

Next is Joe Bigler. And then the next one will be Jon Lindsey.

And again, for some who just joined us and I got your names later, be sure and -- everyone, when you come up, spell your name for the court reporter, and then tell us if you're representing someone or representing yourself, and then tell us what you have to say.

Mr. Bigler.

JOE BIGLER: Thank you. The spelling of my name is J-O-E, B-I-G-L-E-R.

I'm here representing UAPA, the Utah Asphalt Pavement Association, and I just wanted to speak to three points. I wanted to speak against the 35,000 dekatherm annual usage requirement, for lowering the administration fee or changing the methodology that's used to calculate that fee per customer, and against adding demand costs to the interruptible rate classes.

In regards to the 35,000 dekatherm annual fee, many of the -- many of the asphalt producers in the state are less than that. Asphalt producers, I think it is generally accepted, are the best of all customers on the system because they use a large amount of natural gas when the system's mostly idle,

or much more idle, in the summertime, and then they come off the system completely in the wintertime when the heat load customers are -- come back on.

The asphalt plants of usage is largely based on production, and that production is based upon local market demand. And so they -- there are asphalt plants that may use more than that, but intermittently, through the years, will have less production based on the local demand. There's also some asphalt plants that because they're in smaller markets, are completely -- would be completely excluded from transportation rates due to that requirement. And, I think, unfairly so. And so I would propose that the annual requirement be reduced or done away with in regards to that point.

In regards to the admin fee, I think

Mr. Rolfe spoke mostly about that. And I think that

the points that I would have brought up would be

similar to his, and so I'll just forego that and just

acknowledge that the same -- the same thing happens

in the asphalt with the asphalt producers.

The four largest producers have 26-meters among them, and so they pay on a meter-by-meter basis. And I would propose some kind of -- maybe a volumetric basis or some other methodology that --

where customers share -- share the cost by customer rather than by meter.

And then third, I just want to speak regarding adding demand costs to the interruptible rates. The asphalt producers, many have made large capital investments in order to extend the pipelines from the existing system out to their plants. I was involved in a line extension, a three-mile line extension, from Springville to Genova between the cities of Santaguin and Payson.

And just as an example, as an interruptible customer, you -- those pipelines -- the pipeline capacity can fill up with firm customers after you build it. So after -- after the customer constructed the pipeline, the asphalt producer, as an interruptible customer, he can be forced out because the growth of firm customers on that pipeline fully subscribes the capacity on that pipeline.

And so that's -- that is the one thing that happens. And then, obviously, otherwise, during interruptions, you're unallowed to use the system.

And so I just feel like it's -- an asphalt producer shouldn't bear those costs, those costs of the demand portion of the rates, because they're not on the system during the peak day. They're not even -- most

1 of them are completely idle. And if they were on, 2 they would be shut off. 3 So for those reasons, I just wanted to 4 propose those points. Thank you, Mr. Bigler. 5 CHAIRMAN LEVAR: We appreciate your perspectives and your testimony 6 tonight. 7 8 JOE BIGLER: Thank you. Next is Jon Lindsey. 9 CHAIRMAN LEVAR: 10 the one after him will be Robb Beall. 11 THE WITNESS: My name is Jon Lindsey, 12 spelled J-O-N, L-I-N-D-S-E-Y. 13 I'm with the Sinclair Companies. Other than 14 owning Sinclair Oil Corporation, Sinclair also owns 15 Grand America, Little America, Snow Basin Ski Resort, 16 and some other entities. But I mentioned those three 17 because we're a commercial industrial end user, and we are really happy with our service from our 18 19 wholesale natural gas provider, which is Summit 20 Energy. So we're just a transfer customer of 21 Dominion. But we're really happy with our service, 22 and it saves us a lot of money. 23 And our margins are actually really thin at 24 the hotels and -- as well as the ski resorts, so this 25 is a big, you know, cost saver for us and can help us

provide a better service at a better price. And it's 1 2 very beneficial to us to have more control over this 3 price and to -- you know, and to have a choice. 4 We definitely support there being a free marketplace for natural gas for all businesses. 5 6 believe it creates healthy competition and benefits society by lowering costs, increases innovation, 7 provides a better experience for consumers. 8 A lot of our feelings are in line with some 9 10 of the things that have already been said by Mr. Rolfe and Mr. McDonald, so I won't reiterate all 11 12 that. 13 But yeah, we would just encourage the Public 14 Service Commission to keep in mind, you know, kind of 15 these -- I don't know, the less than 100 dekatherm a 16 day residen- -- you know, customers. The larger users are paying a lot lower rate for their utility, 17 18 where, you know, guys like us are paying a lot 19 higher. So I feel like there's a disparity there 20 that should be considered. 21 And -- yeah. Thank you for your 22 consideration. 23 CHAIRMAN LEVAR: Thank you for your 24 testimony and for your perspectives today.

Robb Beall is next. And after him,

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Wallace Fetzer. And don't forget to spell your name for the court reporter and tell us if you're representing someone.

ROBB BEALL: It's R-O-B-B, B-E-A-L-L.

I work for Ken Garff Automotive Group. And we are also a TS customer. We have roughly 20 meters. And we've been pretty happy with it because if we have a question or comments or need anything done, we have a direct result, meaning they're downtown and they're easy to get through to. So the customer service has been great for us. We do have some concerns, though.

I mean, there's some serious barriers of entry. It took us almost a year and a half to get on the TS. The administrative costs, \$4,500 per meter, roughly comes out to 90,000 when you have 20 meters. But we did save 100,000, roughly, per year for all of our different entities.

Another concern that we have is -- one of those barrier to entry -- is the telemetry box. It's a cell phone in a plastic box with electricity to it. It costs \$6,200. I don't know why it costs 6,200. I think that's excessive. I don't know if you've ever had to pay for something like that, but \$6,200, I'd expect a lot more for than a little plastic box on my

gas meter.

So as Ken Garff, we would encourage the Public Service Commission to consider a free marketplace. Something where more competition can be done, where it's easier for us, as light industrial, to be able to go onto this.

Imagine everybody in this room has a cell phone. You're -- imagine you're on month-to-month contract with your carrier, and you decide to change carriers, and they tell you, "Um, well, you can't change for maybe up to 16 months." Because if you tell after February 16th, you would have to wait till the next July 1st to be able to go to TS. Other states, it's like 60 days to change to TS, but you could wait 16 months in Utah.

And then another thing is once you change with your new cell phone carrier, or gas, you get an administrative fee. And you get your telemetry fee for your box. So there's a lot of barrier to entry, and when you start adding 20 meters, and we're looking to expand to other things, it's an expensive cost that you have to consider to see, "Are we going to recoup the savings by being on TS?"

So we would hope that the Commission really looks at these barriers to entry because they add up.

They don't seem that they -- they seem excessive when 1 2 we've paid out 20 meters times 6,200 for each 3 telemetry and then administrative fees of almost 4 100,000 a year. That's a lot when all of our 5 questions, we go to our now gas supplier instead of 6 Dominion Energy. Those are our big concerns. Thank you for 7 8 your time. 9 CHAIRMAN LEVAR: Thank you for your comments 10 and for your perspective tonight. Wallace Fetzer. And then after him will be 11 12 Jason Ouigley. And then after him is Doug Smith. 13 And I don't have anyone else after those three. Ιf 14 there's someone else who was intending -- whose name 15 I haven't said, try to get my attention. 16 Okay. Now, Mr. Fetzer. 17 WALLACE FETZER: Good evening. 18 W-A-L-L-A-C-E, F-E-T-Z-E-R. 19 We're a fourth-generation architectural 20 woodwork firm out in West Valley. We have about 220 21 employees and 130,000-square-foot factory. We work 22 through Summit Energy. They provide us tens of 23 thousands of dollars of savings annually. strongly encourage the Commission to consider the 24 25 importance of competition in this field of energy.

1 And we're small, but -- so my comments are 2 brief. Thank you. 3 CHAIRMAN LEVAR: Thank you for being part of 4 our proceeding tonight. Jason Quigley and then Doug Smith. 5 JASON QUIGLEY: Hello. Jason, J-A-S-O-N, 6 Ouigley, O-U-I-G-L-E-Y. 7 I'm the director of facilities for Merit 8 9 Medical. We're a medical device manufacturing 10 company in South Jordan. We've been around for just 11 over 30 years. We have 2,000 employees based out of 12 South Jordan. And we are really happy with our 13 wholesale gas and are pleased with the opportunity to 14 have choices and to be able to go and shop around and 15 get that discounted gas. 16 We average 30- to \$40,000-a-year savings by 17 being on the wholesale gas. And along with that, I'm 18 spending average 60- to 80,000 I'm still paying to 19 Dominion Gas for fees and other usages. So there's a 20 lot of money going through Dominion Gas. But I'm 21 still getting a savings, so very pleased with that. 22 We would ask the Public Service Commission 23 to allow a free market for the wholesale gas. 24 those are my comments. 25 Thank you for your time.

1 CHAIRMAN LEVAR: Thank you for being part of 2 the hearing tonight. 3 Doug Smith? 4 DOUG SMITH: Doug Smith. D-O-U-G, 5 S-M-I-T-H. I'm here with Granite School District. 6 I'd known I was going to be the last person talking, 7 I would have come earlier. But anyways... 8 9 I'll be honest, we haven't been here very 10 often even though rate changes drastically affect our 11 budgets. And part of that reason is because, 12 unfortunately, we -- I have, at least, noticed a 13 pattern; that when it comes to rate changes, 14 typically the utility requests something, you guys 15 give them about 50 percent of what they request, you 16 guys count it as a win. Pretty sure they count it as 17 a win too, and it doesn't seem to matter a whole lot 18 what we say here. 19 But with the recent rate changes, and 20 especially with transportation gas, this has been a 21 huge savings for our school district. This allows 22 us -- literally, the budgets that affect our 23 utilities are the same budgets that affect the number of teachers we can hire. So as people talk about 24 25 this \$4,500 per meter fee, we are literally paying

enough fees where we could be hiring one to two more teachers every year if we did not have those fees.

It also prevents us from putting more schools on transportation, which would allow us to save even more money on our natural gas, which would also allow us to therefore hire more personnel, more teachers. And if we actually got to the point where we had enough teachers, these are direct effects on your tax dollars, the tax dollars of everybody in here.

Most school districts use transportation gas to some degree. We use it quite a lot. Pretty much every single high school and most of our junior highs. So it's actually saved us as much as \$1 million in a single year. And again, that gives us the ability to be more effective and to better use your tax dollars or the tax dollars of your family or friends. Anyone within Granite School District.

And, like I say, I know most other school districts also use transportation gas.

We were also hoping that we wouldn't see something like this happen. When Dominion took over -- we get invited to a yearly meeting that's basically Dominion's big users. And, of course, we use enough natural gas besides transportation that

1 we're still a very large user. And one of the things 2 that we were very happy to hear about was that Dominion was not going to mess with the 3 4 transportation rates because they didn't want it to look like a cash grab. Well, it's starting to feel a 5 little bit like a cash grab. 6 You know, we have -- being in energy 7 management, we know people all around the country. 8 And like -- I believe it was Mr. Beall mentioned, in 9 10 other states, it is much freer. There are literally 11 states where you can, as a consumer, as a residential 12 consumer, pick where you get your natural gas from. 13 But there's no way we can do that here because of all the fees that have to be put in place. 14 The \$4,500, 15 the box, these are huge barriers into entry and 16 barriers towards the free market, which I believe 17 Utah is very much about. 18 And so I hope, for once, we really see the 19 Public Service Commission say, "It's time that we do 20 our jobs to protect -- not -- to protect the 21 individuals, to protect all of our companies, and not 22 just what kind of feels like is more protecting the 23 monopolies that we're not supposed to have." 24 Anyways, thank you so much. 25 CHAIRMAN LEVAR: Thank you for your

1	testimony.
2	Thank you to everyone who took time out of
3	your evening to be part of this process. Have I
4	missed anyone else who wants to speak to us tonight?
5	(No response.)
6	CHAIRMAN LEVAR: Okay. Well, we will be
7	adjourned, and then we reconvene for continuation of
8	the evidentiary hearing tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m.
9	Thank you.
L O	(Proceedings concluded at 6:31 p.m.)
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	REPORTER'S	CERTIFICATE
STATE OF UTAH)	
COUNTY OF UTAH)	

I, KIMBERLY A. HARMON, a Certified Shorthand
Reporter and Registered Professional Reporter, hereby
certify:

THAT the foregoing proceedings were taken before me at the time and place therein set forth; that the proceedings were taken down by me in shorthand and thereafter my notes were transcribed through computer-aided transcription; and the foregoing transcript constitutes a full, true, and accurate record of such testimony adduced and oral proceedings had, and of the whole thereof.

I further certify that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney of the parties, nor do I have a financial interest in the action.

I have subscribed my name on this 24th day of January, 2020.

Kimberly A. Harmon, RPR, CSR

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