

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF UTAH

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IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION  
OF DOMINION ENERGY UTAH TO  
EXTEND GAS SERVICE TO GOSHEN  
AND ELBERTA, UTAH

Docket No. 21-057-06

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**DIRECT TESTIMONY OF STEVEN STAHELI  
FOR DOMINION ENERGY UTAH**

April 5, 2021

**DEU Exhibit 4.0**

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I. INTRODUCTION

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**Q. Please state your name and business address.**

A. Steven Staheli, 10 West Main St., Goshen, UT 84633.

**Q. By whom are you employed and in what capacity?**

A. I am employed by the Town of Goshen as Mayor. Because Goshen is a small community, in my role as Mayor, I am responsible for the general oversight of all town operations, future planning and public relations. The management and economic strength of Goshen through proper planning is a role I take very seriously. The proposed project to bring natural gas to my community is a project that will ultimately change the future for the town. I have been the key contact from Goshen and Elberta in working with Dominion Energy Utah (“Dominion Energy” or “Company”) on this project.

**Q. Does Elberta have a mayor?**

A. No. Elberta is an unincorporated community without a mayor. However, the Elberta community is closely connected with Goshen. While residents of both communities are very proud of where they are from, we share many aspects of our communities such as educational facilities, businesses, and religion. Though I do not officially represent residents of Elberta, I was able to communicate with some of its residents about this project. Based on those discussions, it is clear to me that their willingness and excitement to participate in this project is similar to that of the residents of Goshen.

**Q. What general areas does your testimony address?**

A. I focus on the benefits of bringing natural gas to Goshen and Elberta (the “Communities”).

25                   **II.     BENEFITS OF NATURAL GAS IN GOSHEN AND ELBERTA**

26                                   **A.     *Growth in Goshen***

27           **Q.     Is the area around Goshen and Elberta growing?**

28           A.     Yes. Goshen and Elberta are currently growing at a 1% residential growth rate.  
29                   Goshen had limitations on building during recent years while it worked on its water  
30                   system, but now construction is allowed and has recommenced. Some new  
31                   construction is ongoing, and I have had inquiries from those interested in constructing  
32                   on vacant lots, who have expressed excitement about the prospect of natural gas being  
33                   available in the Communities.

34           **Q.     Are the Communities forecasting growth in the coming years?**

35           A.     Yes. Goshen and Elberta are located south of Utah Lake at the south end of Utah  
36                   County. Utah County is already expanding to the west and south of Utah Lake, and  
37                   both Goshen and Elberta anticipate that this growth will begin impacting the  
38                   Communities in the coming years. There is currently one neighborhood approved by  
39                   the Town Council that will bring 3 new homes to the community in the next couple of  
40                   years. Goshen is in the process of updating its master plan with new growth estimates,  
41                   but recently updated its water master plan, which estimates 2-3% growth over the next  
42                   20 years.

43           **Q.     Is there potential for industrial or commercial growth in the Communities?**

44           A.     Yes. Goshen has land zoned to the north that may be used for light industrial  
45                   development. If the land is used for light industrial development, the town anticipates  
46                   that prospective business owners will want access to natural gas to heat and operate  
47                   their businesses.

48           **Q.     Do you believe having natural gas in the community will help commercial  
49                   development?**

50           A.     Yes. I believe that there may be greater interest in commercial development if natural  
51                   gas service becomes available, as that will allow Goshen and Elberta to compete for  
52                   economic development opportunities in the future.

53 **B. Cost Savings**

54 **Q. Is it anticipated that customers will save money on their energy bills by having**  
55 **access to natural gas?**

56 A. Yes, absolutely. When Dominion Energy held its virtual open houses, it mentioned  
57 that a typical customer currently pays about \$700 each year for natural gas. I spoke  
58 with one elderly couple who rely upon propane for their space and water heat and they  
59 paid about \$1460 in 2019 and about \$946 in 2020. I spoke with another family who  
60 estimated that they paid \$1,800 per year in propane costs. I spoke with one resident  
61 who heats their home with electricity, and they paid about \$2,600 per year for energy.  
62 Although each customer is different, many customers in Goshen and Elberta will likely  
63 enjoy cost savings if Dominion Energy extends service to those communities. In the  
64 survey responses gathered by Dominion Energy from Goshen and Elberta customers,  
65 cost savings was the largest reason that customers are interested in having access to  
66 natural gas.

67 **Q. Does the propane price fluctuate a lot during the year?**

68 A. Yes. The cost of propane fluctuates dramatically, as it is subject to supply and demand  
69 forces. For example, during the summer, when demand is low, prices are low. But in  
70 winter, when demand is high, it is not unusual for prices to double or even triple. For  
71 customers that are on a fixed income, these price fluctuations can cause serious budget  
72 problems.

73 **Q. What impacts do these price fluctuations have on residents?**

74 A. Residents will frequently try to fill their tank during summer months when prices are  
75 low, and then try to make that propane last as long as they can before refilling at higher  
76 prices. This attempt to save on the cost of fuel often leads to residents keeping their  
77 homes colder than is ideal. Based on my understanding of Dominion Energy's pricing,  
78 its rates are much lower and more stable throughout the year and will not result in as  
79 many residents under-heating their homes.

80 **C. Convenience and Reliability**

81 **Q. Would natural gas be more convenient than existing energy sources in Goshen**  
82 **and Elberta?**

83 A. Yes. I burn pellets and wood to heat my home. This means I have to cut wood for my  
84 fires. I also have to be home to monitor a fire if I want the house to *stay* warm. With  
85 natural gas, I could set my thermostat and leave for work, knowing that the house  
86 wouldn't be freezing when I arrived home.

87 Even those who heat their homes with propane would see improved convenience. A  
88 customer needs to wait for a propane truck to deliver fuel. On a cold winter day,  
89 customers don't want to wait for the warmth that is always available with natural gas.  
90 I've personally had the inconvenience of running out of propane on a Sunday morning.

91 **D. Environmental**

92 **Q. Are the Communities in a non-attainment area, or do they have poor air quality?**

93 A. Yes. The Communities are directly affected by inversions and the typical air problems  
94 in Utah County. Since many of our residents are burning wood and coal to heat their  
95 homes, the Communities are directly contributing to the air problems in Utah County.  
96 Switching these heating sources to natural gas would improve the air quality in Utah  
97 County.

98 **Q. Do residents of Goshen and Elberta burn solid fuels on days when others in Utah**  
99 **County are asked not to?**

100 A. Yes. Residents of Goshen and Elberta have exemptions from the Utah Department of  
101 Air Quality ("DAQ") to burn solid fuels on these days since no other option is available  
102 for them to heat their homes. I've noticed that as I drive from Genola toward Goshen  
103 on a heavy inversion day, there is a thick haze over all of Goshen.

104 *E. Other Options for Natural Gas Service.*

105 **Q. Have Goshen and Elberta pursued natural gas service in the past?**

106 A. Yes, but the cost has always been prohibitive. However, I understand that Utah  
107 Legislature passed a bill that would allow Dominion Energy to seek approval to extend  
108 natural gas service to rural areas, if that extension is approved by the Utah Public  
109 Service Commission. Natural gas would be a great benefit to our community, but we  
110 can't shoulder the cost ourselves. Dominion Energy's request in this docket is the best,  
111 and perhaps the only, way for Goshen and Elberta to receive natural gas service.

112 **Q. Do you support a Commission order approving Dominion Energy's request in this**  
113 **docket?**

114 A. Yes. Goshen and Elberta cannot finance the extension of Dominion Energy's natural  
115 gas distribution system. The extension of natural gas service to the Communities will  
116 provide immediate benefits to its residents and will set the stage for possible future  
117 economic growth and cleaner air in the area. I request that the Commission approve  
118 Dominion Energy's application to extend natural gas service to Goshen and Elberta.

119 **Q. Does this conclude your testimony?**

120 A. Yes.

State of Utah )  
 ) ss.  
County of Utah )

I, Steven Staheli, being first duly sworn on oath, state that the answers in the foregoing written testimony are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. The exhibits attached to the testimony were prepared by me or under my direction and supervision, and they are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. Any exhibits not prepared by me or under my direction and supervision are true and correct copies of the documents they purport to be.



Steven Staheli

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO this 1 day of April, 2021.



Notary Public