

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF UTAH

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION
OF DOMINION ENERGY UTAH TO
EXTEND GAS SERVICE TO GREEN
RIVER, UTAH

Docket No. 21-057-12

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF TRAVIS BACON

FOR DOMINION ENERGY UTAH

August 5th, 2021

DEU Exhibit 4.0

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I. INTRODUCTION

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Q. Please state your name and business address.

A. Travis Bacon, 460 East Main St., Green River, UT 84525.

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

A. I am employed by Green River as its Mayor. Because Green River 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 Green River through proper planning is a role I take very seriously. The proposal to bring natural gas to my community is a project that will ultimately result in very positive changes for the future of Green River. I have been the key contact from Green River in working with Dominion Energy Utah (“Dominion Energy” or “Company”) on this project.

Q. Were your attached exhibits DEU Exhibit 4.0 through 4.02 prepared by you or under your direction?

A. Yes, unless otherwise stated. Where otherwise stated, my exhibits are true and correct copies of the documents they purport to be.

Q. What general areas does your testimony address?

A. I focus on the benefits of bringing natural gas to Green River (the “Community” or “City”).

21 **II. BENEFITS OF NATURAL GAS IN GREEN RIVER**

22 *A. Growth in Green River*

23 **Q. Is the area around Green River growing?**

24 A. Yes. Green River is currently growing at a 1% residential growth rate. Green River
25 has a unique advantage compared to other rural communities because of its location. It
26 is located directly adjacent to I-70 near Moab, Utah. Moab is a rapidly growing
27 community that attracts a large number of tourists and others to the area. Green River
28 is also near State Highway 6 that travelers use to reach I-70. Because of this, Green
29 River is situated near several national parks, and provides access to a number of
30 different recreation options. As recreation in these areas is increasing, Green River will
31 benefit from the growth.

32 **Q. Is Green River forecasting growth in the coming years?**

33 A. Yes. There is currently a developer that is breaking ground on a 10-home development,
34 and I have had conversations with a developer that expressed interest in a new
35 subdivision.

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

37 A. Yes. Green River has an abundance of land that can be developed for various
38 commercial and industrial purposes. It has the benefit of being located at the
39 intersection of Interstate 70 and Highway 6. Green River also has good access to
40 railroad infrastructure. These infrastructure resources are a strong benefit that offers
41 potential new companies critical access to various parts of the state and country. These
42 resources have led Green River to be considered as a possible satellite location for an
43 inland port being developed in Utah.

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

46 A. Yes. Companies have considered Green River as a place to develop in the past but
47 have been deterred by the lack of natural gas. The City is involved with the Economic
48 Development Corporation of Utah (“EDCU”) and has filled out surveys for different

49 companies that are interested in locating their business in Green River. Not having
50 access to natural gas has been a large deterrent to these prospective development
51 opportunities. I believe that there may be greater interest in commercial and industrial
52 development if natural gas service becomes available, as that will allow the City to
53 compete for economic development opportunities in the future.

54 **Q. Has the City signed a Franchise Agreement with Dominion Energy?**

55 A. Yes. The Green River City Council unanimously approved the Franchise Agreement
56 in its city council meeting on July 13, 2021. The agreement has a 30-year term. A
57 copy of the Franchise Agreement is attached to my testimony as DEU Exhibit 4.01.

58 **B. Cost Savings**

59 **Q. Is it anticipated that customers would save money on their energy bills by having**
60 **access to natural gas?**

61 A. Yes, absolutely. When Dominion Energy held its virtual open houses, it mentioned
62 that a typical customer currently pays about \$700 each year for natural gas. Although
63 each customer is different, many customers in Green River will likely enjoy cost
64 savings if Dominion Energy extends service to the City. In the survey responses
65 gathered by Dominion Energy from Green River customers, cost savings was the
66 largest reason that customers are interested in having access to 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 Green**
82 **River?**

83 A. Yes. There is a wide range of fuel types used in Green River. Some use propane, some
84 burn firewood or pellets, while others use electricity or a combination of sources to
85 heat their homes. Each of these sources present convenience or cost issues. For
86 example, a colleague of mine primarily uses pellets to heat her home. She typically
87 uses 5 pallets of pellets every winter that have to be stored or then replenished during
88 the winter.

89 Even those who heat their homes with propane would see improved convenience. A
90 customer needs to wait for a propane truck to deliver fuel. On a cold winter day,
91 customers don't want to wait for the warmth that is always available with natural gas.

92 **D. Environmental**

93 **Q. Is Green River in a non-attainment area, or does it have poor air quality?**

94 A. No. The geologic features near Green River do not lead to the inversions that are
95 common in other parts of the state, so the City always has very clean air. However,
96 Green River does contribute to air pollution by burning wood, pellets, and other solid
97 fuels. Green River High School still uses a coal boiler that would benefit greatly by
98 converting to natural gas.

99 **Q. Is Green River making commitments to clean air?**

100 A. Yes. Green River has signed a Joint Cooperation Agreement with Dominion Energy
101 to help clean Utah air by working cooperatively to use programs and innovative

102 technologies associated with natural gas development, transportation and energy
103 efficiency. A copy of this agreement is attached as DEU Exhibit 4.02

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

105 **Q. Has Green River pursued natural gas service in the past?**

106 A. Yes, but the cost has always been prohibitive. However, I understand that the 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 Green River to obtain natural gas service.

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

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

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

120 A. Yes.

State of Utah)
) ss.
County of Utah)

I, Travis Bacon, 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.

Travis Bacon
Travis Bacon

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO this 5th day of August, 2021.

Conae Black
Notary Public

