

BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In re: Petition for rate increase by Florida City Gas. | DOCKET NO. 20170179-GU

DATED: FEBRUARY 7, 2018

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the testimony of RHONDA L. HICKS on behalf of the staff of the Florida Public Service Commission was electronically filed with the Office of Commission Clerk, Florida Public Service Commission, and copies were furnished by electronic mail to the following on this 7th day of February, 2018.

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DOCKET NO. 20170179-GU Petition for rate increase by City  
Gas Company.

WITNESS: Direct Testimony of Rhonda L. Hicks, Florida Public  
Service Commission; Appearing on Behalf of the Staff of the  
Florida Public Service Commission.

DATE FILED: February 7, 2018

1 DIRECT TESTIMONY OF RHONDA L. HICKS

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

3 A. My name is Rhonda L. Hicks. My address is 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard;  
4 Tallahassee, Florida; 32399-0850.

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

6 A. I am employed by the Florida Public Service Commission (FPSC or Commission) as  
7 Chief of the Bureau of Consumer Assistance in the Office of Consumer Assistance &  
8 Outreach.

9 **Q. Please give a brief description of your educational background and professional  
10 experience.**

11 A. I graduated from Florida A&M University in 1986 with a Bachelor of Science degree  
12 in Accounting. I have worked for the Florida Public Service Commission for more  
13 than 31 years, and I have varied experience in the electric, gas, telephone, and water  
14 and wastewater industries. My work experience includes rate cases, cost recovery  
15 clauses, depreciation studies, tax, audit, consumer outreach, and consumer complaints.  
16 I currently work in the Bureau of Consumer Assistance within the Office of Consumer  
17 Assistance & Outreach where I manage consumer complaints and inquiries.

18 **Q. What is the function of the Bureau of Consumer Assistance?**

19 A. The Bureau's function is to resolve disputes between regulated companies and their  
20 customers as quickly, effectively, and inexpensively as possible.

21 **Q. Do all consumers, who have disputes with their regulated company, contact the  
22 Bureau of Consumer Assistance?**

23 A. No. Consumers may initially file their complaint with the regulated company and  
24 reach resolution without the Bureau's intervention. In fact, consumers are encouraged  
25 to allow the regulated company the opportunity to resolve the dispute prior to any

1 Commission involvement.

2 **Q. What is the purpose of your testimony?**

3 A. The purpose of my testimony is to discuss/outline the number of consumer complaints  
4 logged with the Commission against City Gas Company under Rule 25-22.032, Florida  
5 Administrative Code, Consumer Complaints, from January 1, 2013, through December  
6 31, 2017. My testimony will also provide information on the type of complaints  
7 logged and those complaints that appear to be rule violations.

8 **Q. What do your records indicate concerning the number of complaints logged**  
9 **against City Gas Company?**

10 A. From January 1, 2013, through December 31, 2017, the Florida Public Service  
11 Commission logged 332 complaints against City Gas Company. Of those, 254  
12 complaints were transferred directly to the company for resolution via the  
13 Commission's Transfer-Connect (Warm-Transfer) System. This system allows the  
14 Commission to directly transfer a customer to City Gas Company's customer service  
15 personnel. Once the call is transferred to City Gas Company, it provides the customer  
16 with a proposed resolution.

17 **Q. What have been the most common types of complaints logged against City Gas**  
18 **Company during the period January 1, 2013, through December 31, 2017?**

19 A. During the specified time period, approximately sixty-four (64%) percent of the  
20 complaints logged with the Florida Public Service Commission concerned billing  
21 issues, while approximately thirty-six (36%) of the complaints involved quality of  
22 service issues.

23 **Q. Do you have any exhibits attached to your testimony?**

24 A. Yes. I am sponsoring Exhibit RLH-1, which is a summary listing of customer  
25 complaints logged with the Commission against City Gas Company under Rule 25-

1 22.032, Florida Administrative Code. The complaints listed were received between  
2 January 1, 2013, and December 31, 2017, and were captured in the Commission's  
3 Consumer Activity Tracking System (CATS). The summary groups the complaints by  
4 Close Type ( i.e. GB-01, GB-16, GB-26, etc.) and within each Close Type, the  
5 complaints are segregated by Pre-Close Type.

6 **Q. What is a Pre-Close Type?**

7 A. A Pre-Close Type is an internal categorization that is applied to each complaint  
8 upon receipt. A complaint is assigned a Pre-Close category based solely on the initial  
9 information provided by the consumer.

10 **Q. What is a Close Type?**

11 A. A Close Type is also an internal categorization code. It is assigned to each complaint  
12 once staff completes its investigation and a proposed resolution is provided to the  
13 consumer. In some instances, the Pre-Close category will differ from the Close Type  
14 because staff's investigation reveals facts that were not available upon receipt of the  
15 complaint.

16 **Q. A great majority of complaints were resolved as Close Type GI-02, Courtesy**  
17 **Call/Warm Transfer. Can you explain this Close Type?**

18 A. Yes. As previously stated, City Gas Company participates in the Commission's  
19 Transfer-Connect (Warm-Transfer) System. This system allows the Commission to  
20 directly transfer a customer to the company's customer service personnel. Once the  
21 call is transferred to City Gas Company, it provides the customer with a proposed  
22 resolution. Customers who are not satisfied with the company's proposed resolution  
23 have the option of recontacting the Commission. While the Commission is able to  
24 assign a Pre-Close Type to each of the complaints in this category, a specific Close  
25 Type is not assigned because the proposed resolution is provided by City Gas

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Company. Consequently, the GI-02 Close Type only allows staff to monitor the number of complaints resolved via the Commission’s Transfer-Connect System.

**Q. How many of the complaints summarized on your exhibit has staff determined may be a violation of Commission rules?**

A. Of the 332 complaints logged against City Gas Company during the period January 1, 2013, and December 31, 2017, staff determined that ten complaints appear to be violations of Commission rules. These complaints have a Close Type which is indicated by GB-.

**Q. What was the nature of the apparent rule violations?**

A. The apparent rule violations were related to billing errors (5) and failure to provide timely responses (5) to Commission complaints.

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

A. Yes, it does.



<b>TYPE:</b>	<b>GB-01</b>	<b>IMPROPER RATES APPLIED</b>	
<b>Total Cases For PreClose Type:</b>	<b>IMPROPER BILLS</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>Total Cases For Type</b>	<b>GB-01</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>TYPE:</b>	<b>GB-16</b>	<b>IMPROPER BILLING CALCULATION</b>	
<b>Total Cases For PreClose Type:</b>	<b>IMPROPER BILLS</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Total Cases For Type</b>	<b>GB-16</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>TYPE:</b>	<b>GB-26</b>	<b>inaccurate/insufficient information on bill</b>	
<b>Total Cases For PreClose Type:</b>	<b>IMPROPER BILLS</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>Total Cases For Type</b>	<b>GB-26</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>TYPE:</b>	<b>GB-49</b>	<b>FAILURE TO RESPONSE TO COMMISSION IN</b>	
<b>Total Cases For PreClose Type:</b>	<b>IMPROPER BILLS</b>		<b>4</b>
<b>Total Cases For Type</b>	<b>GB-49</b>	<b>4</b>	
<b>TYPE:</b>	<b>GB-51</b>	<b>FAILURE TO RESPOND IN 7 WKDY TO STAFF</b>	
<b>Total Cases For PreClose Type:</b>	<b>IMPROPER BILLS</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>Total Cases For Type</b>	<b>GB-51</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>TYPE:</b>	<b>GI-02</b>	<b>COURTESY CALL/WARM TRANSFER</b>	
<b>Total Cases For PreClose Type:</b>	<b>DELAY IN CONNECTION</b>		<b>10</b>
<b>Total Cases For PreClose Type:</b>	<b>DEPOSIT</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>Total Cases For PreClose Type:</b>	<b>IMPROPER BILLS</b>		<b>17</b>
<b>Total Cases For PreClose Type:</b>	<b>IMPROPER DISCONNECTS</b>		<b>12</b>
<b>Total Cases For PreClose Type:</b>	<b>PAYMENT ARRANGEMENT</b>		<b>164</b>
<b>Total Cases For PreClose Type:</b>	<b>QUALITY OF SERVICE</b>		<b>44</b>
<b>Total Cases For PreClose Type:</b>	<b>REPAIR</b>		<b>4</b>
<b>Total Cases For PreClose Type:</b>	<b>SAFETY ISSUE</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Total Cases For Type</b>	<b>GI-02</b>	<b>254</b>	

TYPE:	GI-11	REPAIR SERVICE	
Total Cases For PreClose Type:	IMPROPER DISCONNECTS		1
Total Cases For PreClose Type:	QUALITY OF SERVICE		1
Total Cases For Type	GI-11		2
TYPE:	GI-15	OUTAGES (ALL INDUSTRIES)	
Total Cases For PreClose Type:	OUTAGES		1
Total Cases For Type	GI-15		1
TYPE:	GI-17	SAFETY ISSUES	
Total Cases For PreClose Type:	SAFETY ISSUE		4
Total Cases For Type	GI-17		4
TYPE:	GI-25	IMPROPER BILLING (ADDED 7/03)	
Total Cases For PreClose Type:	IMPROPER BILLS		20
Total Cases For PreClose Type:	IMPROPER DISCONNECTS		2
Total Cases For Type	GI-25		22
TYPE:	GI-28	IMPROPER DISCONNECT (ADDED 7/03)	
Total Cases For PreClose Type:	DELAY IN CONNECTION		2
Total Cases For PreClose Type:	IMPROPER DISCONNECTS		8
Total Cases For Type	GI-28		10
TYPE:	GI-29	DELAY IN CONNECTION (ADDED 7/03)	
Total Cases For PreClose Type:	DELAY IN CONNECTION		14
Total Cases For PreClose Type:	IMPROPER BILLS		1
Total Cases For PreClose Type:	QUALITY OF SERVICE		1
Total Cases For Type	GI-29		16
TYPE:	GI-30	QUALITY OF SERVICE (ADDED 7/03)	
Total Cases For PreClose Type:	DELAY IN CONNECTION		1
Total Cases For PreClose Type:	QUALITY OF SERVICE		11
Total Cases For Type	GI-30		12



Total Cases For PreClose Type: QUALITY OF SERVICE 1

Total Cases For Type GI-32 1

Total Complaints Late Responding: 5

Total Complaints Infraction: 10

Grand Total: 332

**\*\*Category**  
**\*I = INFRACTION**  
**\*C=NON-INFRACTION**