

BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In Re: Purchased Gas Adjustment ) DOCKET NO. 940003-GU  
(PGA) Clause. ) ORDER NO. PSC-94-0104-CFO-GU  
\_\_\_\_\_ ) ISSUED: January 28, 1994

ORDER ON CONFIDENTIALITY FOR INDIANTOWN'S  
PURCHASED GAS PROJECTION FOR THE  
SIX MONTH PERIOD ENDING MARCH 31, 1994

Indiantown Gas Company (Indiantown) requests specified confidential treatment of certain line items in its schedules E-1/PFS-0 and E-3P of the purchased gas projection filing for the six month period ending March 31, 1994. The confidential information is found in Document No. 7436-93.

Florida law presumes that documents submitted to governmental agencies shall be public records. The only exceptions to this presumption are the specific statutory exemptions provided in the law and exemptions granted by governmental agencies pursuant to the specific terms of a statutory provision. This presumption is based on the concept that government should operate in the "sunshine." It is this Commission's view that a request for specified confidential classification of documents must meet a very high burden. The Company may fulfill its burden by demonstrating that the documents fall into one of the statutory examples set out in Section 366.093, Florida Statutes, or by demonstrating that the information is proprietary confidential information, the disclosure of which will cause the Company or its ratepayers harm.

The Florida Legislature has determined that "[i]nformation concerning bids or other contractual data, the disclosure of which would impair the efforts of the public utility or its affiliates to contract for goods or services on favorable terms" is proprietary confidential business information. Section 366.093(3)(d), Florida Statutes.

To establish that material is proprietary confidential business information under Section 366.093(3)(d), Florida Statutes, a utility must demonstrate (1) that the information is contractual data, and (2) that the disclosure of the data would impair the efforts of the utility to contract for goods or services on favorable terms. The Commission has previously recognized that this latter requirement does not necessitate the showing of actual impairment, or the more demanding standard of actual adverse results; instead, it must simply be shown that disclosure is "reasonably likely" to impair the company's contracting for goods or services on favorable terms.

DOCUMENT NUMBER-DATE

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FPSC-RECORDS/REPORTING

Florida Gas Transmission Company's (FGT) demand and commodity rates for transportation and sales service are set forth in FGT's tariff, which is on file with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and is a matter of public record. Rates for purchases of gas supplies from persons other than FGT, however, are based on negotiations between Indiantown and third party vendors (vendors). Since "open access" became effective in the FGT system on August 1, 1990, gas supplies became available to Indiantown from vendors other than FGT. Purchases are made by Indiantown at varying prices, depending on the term during which purchases will be made, the quantities involved, and whether the purchase will be made on a firm or interruptible basis. The price at which gas is available to Indiantown can vary from vendor-to-vendor.

Indiantown argues that the information found in columns A-G of lines 7-9, 11a-12, 26-28, 31-33, 45-47, and 50-52 on Schedule E-1/PFS-0 is contractual information, the disclosure of which would impair Indiantown's efforts to contract for goods and services on favorable terms. The information shows the price or weighted average price which Indiantown has projected to be paid to its vendors for specific months and period dates. Indiantown states that knowledge of the projected prices to be paid to its vendor(s) during a month would give other competing vendor(s) information with which to potentially or actually control the pricing of gas, by either all quoting a particular price, or by adhering to a price offered by Indiantown's current vendor(s). Even though this information is the projected price or weighted average projected price to be paid by Indiantown during the involved month, a vendor which sells gas at a price less than such weighted average cost could refuse in the future to make price concessions previously made, and could refuse to sell at a price less than such weighted average projected price. Indiantown asserts that the end result is reasonably likely to be increased gas prices, and therefore, an increased cost of gas which Indiantown must recover from its ratepayers. I agree. I find the above-mentioned lines on Schedule E-1/PFS-0 to be proprietary confidential business information.

In addition, Indiantown argues that the information in lines 1-6 of columns E, G, H, I, and K on Schedule E-3P is contractual data which should be afforded confidential treatment. The information delineates the number of therms projected to be purchased for the system supply, the number of therms purchased for end use, the commodity costs, the demand costs, and FGT's GRI, ACA, TRC, and TOP costs for purchases by Indiantown from its vendor(s). These figures are algebraic functions of the price per therm paid

to vendors in the column entitled "Total Cents Per Therm." Publication of these columns together, or independently, could allow other vendors to derive the purchase price of gas paid by Indiantown to its vendor(s). Thus, Indiantown argues, disclosure of this information would permit other vendors to determine contractual information which, if made public, would impair Indiantown's efforts to contract for goods and services on favorable terms. I agree.

I find that by granting the company's confidentiality request, others will be able to calculate the purchased gas adjustment factor without suppliers being able to back-in to the price paid by the company to its vendor(s). The confidential information of the purchased gas projection filing is approved only for the six month period ending March 31, 1994.

Indiantown asserts that the material for which it seeks classification is intended to be and is treated by Indiantown as proprietary information and that it has not publicly disclosed this material.

Indiantown requests that this information not be declassified until April 30, 1996, providing confidential treatment for the information for more than 24 months from the date the request was filed. Under Section 366.093(4), Florida Statutes, and Rule 25-22.006(8), Florida Administrative Code, proprietary confidential business information may be protected for 18 months. The Commission may approve a longer period if it finds, for good cause, that such longer period is necessary to protect Indiantown's ratepayers or business operations.

Indiantown does not request an extension per se nor does it specify why 18 months is an inadequate time period. Consequently, this information shall only be held as proprietary confidential business information for 18 months from the date of this order. This will sufficiently enable Indiantown to negotiate future gas purchase contracts without other vendors having access to information which could impair Indiantown's ability to make natural gas purchases on favorable terms. I note that this 18 month declassification period will ultimately protect Indiantown and its customers.

ORDER NO. PSC-94-0104-CFO-GU  
DOCKET NO. 940003-GU  
PAGE 4

It is, therefore,

ORDERED by Chairman J. Terry Deason, as Prehearing Officer, that the proprietary confidential business information discussed above, as found in Document No. 7436-93, shall be afforded confidential treatment. It is further

ORDERED that this information will remain confidential for a period of 18 months from the date this Order is issued.

By ORDER of Chairman J. Terry Deason, as Prehearing Officer, this 28th day of January, 1994.

  
J. PERRY DEASON, Chairman and  
Prehearing Officer

( S E A L )  
DLC:bmi

NOTICE OF FURTHER PROCEEDINGS OR JUDICIAL REVIEW

The Florida Public Service Commission is required by Section 120.59(4), Florida Statutes, to notify parties of any administrative hearing or judicial review of Commission orders that is available under Sections 120.57 or 120.68, Florida Statutes, as well as the procedures and time limits that apply. This notice should not be construed to mean all requests for an administrative hearing or judicial review will be granted or result in the relief sought.

Any party adversely affected by this order, which is preliminary, procedural or intermediate in nature, may request: 1) reconsideration within 10 days pursuant to Rule 25-22.038(2), Florida Administrative Code, if issued by a Prehearing Officer; 2) reconsideration within 15 days pursuant to Rule 25-22.060, Florida Administrative Code, if issued by the Commission; or 3) judicial review by the Florida Supreme Court, in the case of an electric, gas or telephone utility, or the First District Court of Appeal, in the case of a water or wastewater utility. A motion for reconsideration shall be filed with the Director, Division of Records and Reporting, in the form prescribed by Rule 25-22.060,

ORDER NO. PSC-94-0104-CFO-GU  
DOCKET NO. 940003-GU  
PAGE 5

Florida Administrative Code. Judicial review of a preliminary, procedural or intermediate ruling or order is available if review of the final action will not provide an adequate remedy. Such review may be requested from the appropriate court, as described above, pursuant to Rule 9.100, Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure.