

BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In re: Petition for approval to
add late payment charge to
Natural Gas Tariff by Sebring
Gas System, Inc.

DOCKET NO. 990946-GU
ORDER NO. PSC-99-1953-TRF-GU
ISSUED: October 5, 1999

The following Commissioners participated in the disposition of this matter:

JOE GARCIA, Chairman
J. TERRY DEASON
SUSAN F. CLARK
JULIA L. JOHNSON
E. LEON JACOBS, JR.

ORDER GRANTING APPROVAL OF TARIFF REVISION

BY THE COMMISSION:

On July 21, 1999, Sebring Gas System, Inc. (Sebring) filed a petition seeking approval to implement a late payment charge. Sebring believes that by applying a late payment charge, the company will be able to allocate the costs associated with unpaid balances directly to those customers who do not pay their bills timely.

From January 1998 to May 1999, approximately 12.85 percent of Sebring's accounts were delinquent. Accounts are delinquent when payment is not received by the due date indicated on the customer's bill, which is approximately twenty days from the date of mailing. Sebring proposes to assess a late payment fee for all customers failing to pay their bill by the past due date.

This proposed modification would allow Sebring to assess a late charge of 1.5 percent or \$5.00, whichever is greater, of the unpaid balance to all delinquent accounts other than federal, state, and local government entities. Local governments are subject to imposition of a late payment charge in accordance with Section 21.422, Florida Statutes; state agencies according to Section 218.70-79, Florida Statutes; and federal agencies according to Section 31, United States Code, 3901-3907.

DOCUMENT NUMBER-DATE

11985 OCT-5 8

FPSC-RECORDS/REPORTING

ORDER NO. PSC-99-1953-TRF-GU
DOCKET NO. 990946-GU
PAGE 2

Sebring states its total past due receivables from January 1998 through December 1998 were \$79,589.40. The company reported an achieved ROE of (22.47%) on its latest surveillance report for December 1998. If the \$5.00 late charge had been in effect during 1998, it could have increased the earned ROE by 1.3%.

We have previously approved late payment provisions similar to that proposed by Sebring Gas. We have granted the authority to assess a late payment fee to City Gas Company of Florida in Order No. PSC-98-0261-FOF-GU; Peoples Gas System, Inc. in Order No. PSC-96-0371-FOF-GU; Florida Power Corporation in Order No. PSC-95-1087-FOF-EI; and St. Joe Natural Gas Company in Order No. PSC-96-1000-FOF-GU.

We find that, prior to implementation, Sebring shall provide thirty-day advance notice to its customers. Further, Sebring shall submit a sample of that thirty-day advance notice to our Division of Electric and Gas for approval prior to implementation. The effective date of the proposed tariff change will be thirty days after our vote.

Based on the foregoing, it is

ORDERED by the Florida Public Service Commission that Petition for Approval to Add Late Payment Charge to Natural Gas Tariff by Sebring Gas System, Inc. is approved. It is further

ORDERED by the Florida Public Service Commission that Sebring Gas System, Inc. shall provide thirty-day advance notice to its customers. It is further

ORDERED by the Florida Public Service Commission that Sebring Gas System, Inc. shall submit a sample of the thirty-day advance notice to the Division of Electric and Gas for approval prior to implementation. It is further

ORDERED by the Florida Public Service Commission that the tariff shall be effective October 7, 1999. It is further

ORDERED that if a protest is filed within 21 days of issuance of the Order, the tariff shall remain in effect with any charges held subject to refund pending resolution of the protest. It is further

ORDER NO. PSC-99-1953-TRF-GU
DOCKET NO. 990946-GU
PAGE 3

ORDERED that if no timely protest is filed, this docket shall be closed upon the issuance of a Consummating Order.

By ORDER of the Florida Public Service Commission this 5th day of October, 1999.

BLANCA S. BAYÓ, Director
Division of Records and Reporting

By: Kay Flynn
Kay Flynn, Chief
Bureau of Records

(S E A L)

TRC

NOTICE OF FURTHER PROCEEDINGS

The Florida Public Service Commission is required by Section 120.569(1), 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.

Mediation may be available on a case-by-case basis. If mediation is conducted, it does not affect a substantially interested person's right to a hearing.

The Commission's decision on this tariff is interim in nature and will become final, unless a person whose substantial interests are affected by the proposed action files a petition for a formal proceeding, in the form provided by Rule 28-106.201, Florida Administrative Code. This petition must be received by the Director, Division of Records and Reporting, 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850, by the close of business on October 26, 1999.

ORDER NO. PSC-99-1953-TRF-GU
DOCKET NO. 990946-GU
PAGE 4

In the absence of such a petition, this Order shall become final and effective upon the issuance of a Consummating Order.

Any objection or protest filed in this docket before the issuance date of this order is considered abandoned unless it satisfies the foregoing conditions and is renewed within the specified protest period.