

BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In re: Petition for rate increase by Peoples Gas System, Inc.	DOCKET NO. 20230023-GU
In re: Petition for approval of 2022 depreciation study, by Peoples Gas System, Inc.	DOCKET NO. 20220219-GU
In re: Petition for approval of depreciation rate and subaccount for renewable natural gas facilities leased to others, by Peoples Gas System, Inc.	DOCKET NO. 20220212-GU ORDER NO. PSC-2023-0238-CFO-GU ISSUED: August 15, 2023

ORDER GRANTING PEOPLES GAS SYSTEM, INC.'S
REQUEST FOR CONFIDENTIAL CLASSIFICATION AND
REQUEST FOR TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE ORDER
(DOCUMENT NO. 04449-2023)

On August 1, 2023, pursuant to Section 366.093, Florida Statutes (F.S.), and Rule 25-22.006, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), Peoples Gas System, Inc. (PGS) filed a Request for Confidential Classification and Request for Temporary Protective Order (Request) for information contained in its response to Florida Public Service Commission (Commission) Staff's Seventh Set of Interrogatories. (Document No. 04449-2023). This request was filed in Docket No. 20230023-GU.

Request for Confidential Classification

PGS contends that the information contained in Document No. 04449-2023 constitutes proprietary and confidential business information entitled to protection under Section 366.093, F.S., and Rule 25-22.006, F.A.C. PGS asserts that this information is intended to be and is treated by PGS as private and has not been publicly disclosed. PGS further contends that the information relates to the competitive interests of PGS, the disclosure of which would impair its competitive business. More specifically, the information for which confidentiality is sought relates to projected average annual sale price of environmental attributes used in economic projections which was provided to PGS by third parties on a confidential basis as well as an annual breakdown of operation and maintenance expenses and payments to be made to Alliance Dairies for the renewable natural gas project.

Ruling

Section 366.093(1), F.S., provides that records the Commission has found to contain proprietary business information shall be kept confidential and shall be exempt from Chapter 119, F.S. Section 366.093(3), F.S., defines proprietary confidential business information as information that is intended to be and is treated by the company as private, in that disclosure of

the information would cause harm to the company's ratepayers or business operations, and has not been voluntarily disclosed to the public. Section 366.093(3), F.S., provides that proprietary confidential business information includes, but is not limited to:

(e) Information relating to competitive interests, the disclosure of which would impair the competitive business of the provider of the information.

Upon review, it appears the above-referenced information satisfies the criteria set forth in Section 366.093(3), F.S., for classification as proprietary confidential business information. The information described above and in PGS's Request appears to contain information concerning bids or other contractual data, the disclosure of which would impair the efforts of PGS or its affiliates to contract for goods or services on favorable terms. Thus, the information identified in Document No. 04449-2023 shall be granted confidential classification.

Pursuant to Section 366.093(4), F.S., the information for which confidential classification is granted herein shall remain protected from disclosure for a period of up to 18 months from the date of issuance of this Order. At the conclusion of the 18-month period, the confidential information will no longer be exempt from Section 119.07(1), F.S., unless PGS or another affected person shows, and the Commission finds, that the records continue to contain proprietary confidential business information.

Request for Temporary Protective Order

PGS also seeks protection of the documents as provided in Section 366.093(2), F.S., and Rule 25-22.006(6), F.A.C. Section 366.093(2), F.S., directs that all records produced pursuant to a discovery request for which proprietary confidential status is requested shall be treated by any party subject to the public records law as confidential and exempt from Section 119.07(1), F.S. Rule 25-22.006(6), F.A.C., codifies the Commission's policy regarding the protection of confidential information from public disclosure during the discovery process in a manner that is not overly burdensome to both parties. Rule 25-22.006(6)(a), F.A.C., states, in pertinent part:

In any formal proceeding before the Commission, any utility or other person may request a protective order protecting proprietary confidential business information from discovery. Upon a showing by a utility or other person and a finding by the Commission that the material is entitled to protection, the Commission shall enter a protective order limiting discovery in the manner provided for in Rule 1.280, Florida Rules of Civil Procedure.

In addition, Rule 25-22.006(6)(c), F.A.C., states that if a party allows the Office of Public Counsel to inspect or take possession of utility information, then that "utility may request a temporary protective order exempting the information from Section 119.07(1), F.S." The rule further requires the utility to file a specific request for a protective order under paragraph (a) of the rule if the information is to be used in the proceeding before the Commission.

Ruling

Upon consideration of PGS's assertions of the confidential nature of the information contained in Document No. 04449-2023, PGS's Request for Temporary Protective Order is hereby granted. As a result, this information shall be protected from disclosure pursuant to Rule 25-22.006(6), F.A.C.

Based on the foregoing, it is hereby

ORDERED by Commissioner Gabriella Passidomo, as Prehearing Officer, that Peoples Gas System Inc.'s Request for Confidential Classification of Document No. 04449-2023 is granted. It is further

ORDERED that the information in Document No. 04449-2023, for which confidential classification has been granted, shall remain protected from disclosure for a period of up to 18 months from the date of issuance of this Order. At the conclusion of the 18-month period, the confidential information will no longer be exempt from Section 119.07(1), F.S., unless Peoples Gas System, Inc. or another affected person shows, and the Commission finds, that the records continue to contain proprietary confidential business information. It is further

ORDERED that Peoples Gas System, Inc.'s Request for Temporary Protective Order of the information in Document No. 04449-2023 is granted. It is further

ORDERED that this Order shall be the only notification by the Commission to the parties of the date of declassification of the materials discussed herein.

By ORDER of Commissioner Gabriella Passidomo, as Prehearing Officer, this 15th day of August, 2023.



Gabriella Passidomo
Commissioner and Prehearing Officer
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Copies furnished: A copy of this document is provided to the parties of record at the time of issuance and, if applicable, interested persons.

MRT

NOTICE OF FURTHER PROCEEDINGS OR JUDICIAL REVIEW

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.

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 25-22.0376, Florida Administrative Code; or (2) 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 Office of Commission Clerk, in the form prescribed by Rule 25-22.0376, 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.