1	FLORT	BEFORE THE IDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
2	1 2011	DOCKET NO. 020010-WS
3	In the Matter o	of
5	APPLICATION FOR STAF	NDS COUNTY
6	BY THE WOODLANDS OF PLACID, L.P.	LARE
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9	THE OFF: THE .PDF VE	ICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF THE HEARING, ERSION INCLUDES PREFILED TESTIMONY.
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11 12	PROCEEDINGS:	SERVICE HEARING
13 14	BEFORE:	COMMISSIONER J. TERRY DEASON COMMISSIONER RUDOLPH BRADLEY COMMISSIONER CHARLES DAVIDSON
15 16	DATE:	Wednesday, May 28, 2003
17	TIME:	Commenced at 6:00 p.m. Concluded at 6:35 p.m.
18 19	PLACE:	Sebring Civic Center 355 W. Center Avenue Sebring, Florida
2021	REPORTED BY:	JANE FAUROT, RPR
22		Chief, Office of Hearing Reporter Services FPSC Division of Commission Clerk and Administrative Services
23		(850) 413-6732
24		
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1	APPEARANCES:
2	MARTIN S. FRIEDMAN, ESQUIRE, Rose, Sundstrom &
3	Bentley, LLP, 600 S. North Lake Boulevard, Suite 160, Altamont
4	Springs, Florida 32701, appearing on behalf of Highvest
5	Corporation and L.P. Utilities Corporation.
6	STEPHEN C. BURGESS, ESQUIRE, Office of Public
7	Counsel, c/o The Florida Legislature, 111 West Madison Street,
8	Room 812, Tallahassee, Florida, 32399-1400, appearing on
9	behalf of the Office of Public Counsel.
10	LARRY HARRIS, ESQUIRE, and KATHERINE
11	FLEMING, FPSC General Counsel's Office, 2540 Shumard
12	Oak Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850,
13	appearing on behalf of the Commission Staff.
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PROCEEDINGS

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COMMISSIONER DEASON: Call the hearing to order. This is a continuation of a hearing we have been having since this morning at 10:00 o'clock. We had a customer hearing and then we convened the technical phase of the hearing.

We have concluded that, and we are here to convene another customer hearing for this evening. Let me ask, are there any customers who have joined us that were not here this morning? If you will please just raise your hand. Let the record reflect that all of the customers that are with us were here this morning.

I'm just asking that question because I think it is a little redundant to go through all of the introductions and all of the preliminary matters for persons who have already heard that once, so we will just get right to the matter at hand. We will dispense with introductions and preliminary matters.

We are here to hear from customers. Mr. Burgess, do you have customers signed up to address us for this evening hearing?

MR. BURGESS: I do. And the first customer I have llisted is Sara Keller.

COMMISSIONER DEASON: Let me ask you this question. Do you have any customers signed up who did not testify this morning that it would be their first time to testify?

MR. BURGESS: In a fashion I do. I have Mr. John

1 Lovelette who has signed up, who testified but testified as a 2 utility witness in the case and presented rebuttal testimony. 3 COMMISSIONER DEASON: We will get to Mr. Lovelette 4 then in due course. You may proceed with your witness. 5 MR. FRIEDMAN: Commissioner Deason, may I interpose 6 an objection? 7 COMMISSIONER DEASON: Surely. 8 9 10

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MR. FRIEDMAN: I would object to any witness testifying this afternoon that also testified this morning. I suggest to you that the customer input testimony is not intended to be one by which the customer testifies, then comes back later and provides rebuttal testimony, and that it is inappropriate to allow the customer to do so because it allows the customer, basically, to have a rebuttal. And that is not the purpose of the customer testimony portion of the hearing.

COMMISSIONER DEASON: Okay. Your objection is noted and it is overruled. We will hear from the customers. But I will give you the latitude that if new matters come up that you feel that you need to address in some manner to either request that you recall one of your witnesses to address that in some manner. And I will leave that to your discretion to request that if you see fit. Mr. Burgess, you may continue.

SARA KELLER

appeared as a witness and, swearing to tell the truth. testified as follows:

DIRECT STATEMENT

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MR. BURGESS: Yes. Ms. Keller, would you please reintroduce yourself for the record. You need not give your address. And then express to the Commission those areas that you have additional concerns.

MS. KELLER: My name is Sara Keller. And you think that you are saying everything that you had in mind when you get up here, and then you find that you have overlooked something. One of the things that I had overlooked in what I had intended to say was that in 1997 it was brought to the Commission's attention that Woodlands was not certified to sell water. And this is now 2003 and the certification is still in question.

That being such a long span of time, I feel, and I will express again that I think the Commission has been very lenient. Because I do know that one of the board members had notified the Commission back in '97, Elwood Breman (phonetic), I think it was, he was on the board. And it has taken this llong to reach this point.

And in the meantime, in 1998, of course, then the fees were raised and they still weren't certified. So, that is a big concern because this is a long spread of time. I can't ask you is this normal.

Another point that I didn't bring up was in addition to the water and sewer that we pay Woodlands, call it Woodlands or Highvest, we also pay them a lease for some of -- for a building that we use. For a couple of years it was 15,000 a year and now it is 30.

On the sale of the front building, that was very upsetting to us, because although the CFRLP lots abstained from voting on the price that was to be obtained for the property, they did not abstain on the question should the POA offer the property for sale. There were 296 votes for it to be sold, and 248 of those were Cozier votes. The final analysis was it was 48 for and 65 against. No, 50 against. Now those figures are taken from the figures published by Mr. Lovelette.

Where they abstained for selling the property for 200,000, CFRLP abstained with 232 votes, but Highvest voted 16, and that carried that one. It carried it 48 for it. Without his votes, let me put it that way, without Cozier's votes there were 48 people voted to sell it for 200,000 and 65 voted against it. So we are more than a little concerned because the property is gone. And while the assumption was made that the court awarded the property to us, the property always belonged to us and that was validated by the court.

We were also concerned at the devious way that the building went from the property owners through Camper Corral to Highvest. Camper Corral purchased the front building, Highvest mortgaged it in June, Highvest foreclosed in July for nonpayment of the mortgage, and then the building became

1	Highvest's. We haven't understood. We don't understand that.	
2	We went to court to get that property. We had not had use of	
3	that property since 1995. It was our clubhouse. Now we are	
4	paying Woodlands or Highvest 30,000 to use the clubhouse that	
5	they have.	
6	Let's see. Mr. Friedman will probably say I am	
7	rebutting some testimony if I say that I have an RV. And if I	
8	go into a place to spend the season, I'm not going to wash	
9	dishes in the bathhouse, and I'm not going to do any cooking in	
10	the bathhouse because it is not set up for that.	
11	I have nothing else to say.	
12	COMMISSIONER DEASON: Mr. Friedman, any questions?	
13	MR. FRIEDMAN: No.	
14	COMMISSIONER DEASON: Staff, any questions?	
15	MR. HARRIS: No questions.	
16	COMMISSIONER DEASON: Thank you, Ms. Keller.	
17	Mr. Burgess, you may call your next witness.	
18	MR. BURGESS: I would call Judy Pernod.	
19	MR. FRIEDMAN: Commissioner Deason, I would interpose	
20	the same objection.	
21	COMMISSIONER DEASON: Your objection is noted.	
22	JUDY PERNOD	
23	appeared as a witness and, swearing to tell the truth,	
24	testified as follows: -	
25	DIRECT STATEMENT	

FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

MR. BURGESS: Mr. Pernod, would you simply 1 2 reintroduce yourself and then just present your testimony to 3 the Commission. 4 MS. PERNOD: My name is Judy Pernod. And I just 5 wanted to make a few points that I forgot to mention. Out of 6 the 149 homeowners in Camp Florida that pay the \$35 a month 7 rent or water fee, there is only 25 homeowners that live there year-round, so there is only, you know, very few people that 8 9 really use the facilities during the year. 10 And one point I wanted to make, we have -- a lot of 11 our friends that are there just two months out of the year, and 12 some of them do not even have sprinkler systems, so they don't 13 use a drop of water the majority of the time and still have to 14 pay the \$35. I think the water is fine. We have no problem with the water, I am very satisfied with the water. But I do 15 16 think that when we are not there we should just have a base 17 rate to pay. That's all I have to say. 18 MR. BURGESS: Thank you, Ms. Pernod. MR. FRIEDMAN: No questions. 19 20 COMMISSIONER DEASON: Staff, any questions? 21 MR. HARRIS: No questions. 22 COMMISSIONER DEASON: Thank you, ma'am. 23 Mr. Burgess. 24 MR. BURGESS: For my final witness, it is my turn to

impose an objection. Mr. Lovelette has signed up, and I am

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1	compelled to report that to the Commission. But Mr. Lovelette
2	has testified already twice today, and unless there is
3	something that I'm not aware of, I think it is very unusual for
4	someone who is the exclusive witness of the utility company
5	and I know he lives within the Camp Florida Resort Park but
6	to come forward and testify in the customer proceeding I think
7	is highly out of the ordinary and I don't see any need for it.
8	COMMISSIONER DEASON: Let me is Mr. Lovelette a
9	customer of the utility company, do you know?
10	MR. BURGESS: As far as I know, I don't know whether
11	he owns property or not.
12	COMMISSIONER DEASON: Well, let's just allow Mr.
13	Lovelette to take the stand and I will ask some preliminary
14	questions.
15	MR. BURGESS: Very good.
16	MR. LOVELETTE: Commissioners, my concern was
17	COMMISSIONER DEASON: Get to a microphone, please.
18	MR. FRIEDMAN: Well
19	COMMISSIONER DEASON: Mr. Friedman, you may address
20	the Commission.
21	MR. FRIEDMAN: Mr. Lovelette listed himself as a
22	witness in case he wanted to say something in response to what
23	the two earlier witnesses said.
24	COMMISSIONER DEASON: And there is no need for him to
25	respond?

1	MR. FRIEDMAN: That is my understanding, yes.
2	Although I think as a customer he would have every right as any
3	other customer to say his peace, I think that this witness has
4	spoken, and I don't think there is any need to address any of
5	the comments of the two customers who spoke before.
6	COMMISSIONER DEASON: Are you willing to withdraw
7	your objection to the testimony of the customers?
8	MR. FRIEDMAN: No.
9	COMMISSIONER DEASON: Your objection to the customers
10	stands, but this witness is not necessary to address their
11	comments?
12	MR. FRIEDMAN: That's correct. I don't think there
13	is any need to rebut it, but that still doesn't mean that I
14	agree that procedurally they should be allowed
15	COMMISSIONER DEASON: I'm just asking, Mr. Friedman.
16	That's fine.
17	MR. FRIEDMAN: And I am telling you my opinion.
18	COMMISSIONER DEASON: You have never hesitated in
19	doing that before.
20	Okay. So Mr. Lovelette does not need to take the
21	stand. Does that exhaust your list of customers?
22	MR. BURGESS: It does, Commissioner.
23	COMMISSIONER DEASON: Okay. Thank you all again for
24	being here. I appreciate your testimony this morning and your
25	testimony this evening. Staff?

MR. HARRIS: Commissioners, I believe that concludes what we have scheduled for the hearing today.

Under the normal course of events, we would have this set for a briefing schedule, an agenda conference which you could decide. I would submit to you that with the limited number of issues and the testimony we have heard in one day, that it may be possible for the Commission to determine that a bench vote would be appropriate today where you would not order briefs to be submitted and decide the issues today without the necessity of a separate agenda conference. That would be at your discretion.

COMMISSIONER DEASON: Mr. Burgess.

MR. BURGESS: Commissioner, we would not object to the Commission arriving at a decision on a bench vote, nor do we object to the process set out with post-hearing pleadings being filed. So, you know, I am open to either one. I certainly have no objection to the Commission making a decision. It has been a long time. If the Commission deems it appropriate, we have no problem with that. We have no problem, further, though, with submitting some type of post-hearing finding of fact.

COMMISSIONER DEASON: Mr. Friedman.

MR. FRIEDMAN: I vehemently object to any decision being made at this time. The prehearing order has been entered in this case. Everybody understands that procedure. We have

all been guided by that procedure in exercising our due process rights and how to present our case to this hearing.

You will note that the prehearing order says post-hearing procedure, "Each party shall file a post-hearing statement of issues and position," et cetera, et cetera, the standard language. Nobody has suggested that this procedure was not one that was going to be followed. I think that it is highly improper to subvert this previously noticed procedure, and sincerely believe that it is a breach of my client's due process rights to change the procedure at this point in time.

And I think that whether the issues are limited or not, there are substantial legal arguments to be made, particularly with regard to the interrelationship of the corporations. That, I think, factually everybody agreed from day one what those -- well, maybe not day one, but at least certainly at some point in the procedure we are all agreed as to the identities of those corporate entities and partnerships, and that the deciding factor on that is going to be based upon the application of the law to those facts.

We have not had an opportunity to present that law to you. I am not prepared to do it today, because I relied on this order that says I am going to get a chance to file a post-hearing statement of positions. And that is the point that I intend to argue the law it is applies to these facts. I can't do it in a closing statement today. And I think that it

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is highly prejudicial to rule upon this case without allowing us that opportunity to file post-hearing statements and positions.

COMMISSIONER DEASON: Mr. Harris, you have heard the comments of Public Counsel and Mr. Friedman?

MR. HARRIS: Yes, I did. Staff would recommend that you do have the authority to do this, and there is a couple of reasons why Staff believes that you should. First, I think the uniform rules contemplate clearly that the presiding officer has -- and I am quoting from 28-106.211, Florida Administrative Code, "The presiding officer before whom a case is pending may issue any orders necessary to effectuate discovery to prevent delay and to promote the just, speedy and inexpensive determination of all aspects of the case, including bifurcating the proceeding."

In this case rate case expense has been brought up as an issue by a number of parties. The additional burden of going forward with briefing an agenda conference would add an substantial amount to rate case expense. And this is a small utility that would ultimately bear that burden should the Commission order rate case expense.

Second, delay. This is a proceeding that has been going on for a long time. I think the PAA was, in fact, in December, and that was delayed a number of times. I think it was originally scheduled for October of 2002. Staff believes it is time to get a final order before us so we can get this moving. There is an issue of a large number of refunds.

Depending on what the Commission votes, you know, those have been held for quite a period of time.

As far as due process, my understanding of due process involves notice and an opportunity to be heard. Mr. Friedman's argument that the order establishing procedure and the prehearing order do mention briefs is correct. My interpretation of that has always been in the context of the second portion of the paragraph that says if you don't file a brief, then you waive your positions.

I understand the argument that he would like to argue the law and have a brief to present that to the Commission. But we have got to keep in mind that the briefs would be considered by the Commission, but the agenda conference is between Staff and the Commission. Mr. Friedman could make his argument and this Commission would consider that. But just as the facts are simple -- well, that everyone sort of agrees that Mr. Cozier owns these interrelated companies. I think the law is fairly simple, at least what OPC's position and what the utility's are, that the utility would say that you can't, quote, pierce the corporate veil. I think OPC would say that you can pierce the corporate veil. And I think the Commission with what they have heard can make a determination on what they believe the law to be, at least the factual part of it. Mr.

Friedman has the opportunity to appeal that if he believes the Commission reaches the wrong result.

In conclusion, I believe in the interest of preventing delay, an expensive resolution of the case, to get us moved along, and in that I don't know that briefs on what the law of corporate liability are essential to your decision today. Staff, or at least Legal Staff would recommend that you can, in fact, have a bench decision, should you decide to do that.

COMMISSIONER DEASON: Commissioners, first of all, let me say I'm looking for a joint decision here. But let me kind of lay out where I am. I believe it is within our discretion to have a bench decision. The question is whether we want to exercise it.

I am compelled by what Mr. Friedman indicated, that he was relying upon the prehearing order, and that he felt that he was going to have an opportunity to file a legal brief on legal questions that primarily relates to the potential for a refund, and corporate structure and corporate entities, and that he is not prepared to make that legal argument in a closing argument at this time because of his reliance on the prehearing order.

While I think that we can go forward and make a decision, it is within our discretion, I do agree with Staff counsel that language in the prehearing order perhaps is

ambiguous. I always interpreted it that it did not necessarily mean you had a right to file a brief, but that if the Commission wanted briefs, that if you wanted to preserve your positions you had to file a brief, and that if did you not file a brief that you potentially could be waiving your positions.

However, I do understand Mr. Friedman's reliance on this language. I can see where he could interpret it that way. So I think that in the future, and, Mr. Harris, you may want to take this back and discuss it with general counsel, that perhaps our prehearing orders need to be more clear that that language concerning filing of briefs does not necessarily give a right to a brief. And that in cases where we contemplate that a bench decision may be appropriate, perhaps that language should be included in the prehearing order, at least discussed at the prehearing conference.

I am very sensitive to the size of this utility and the impact on customers of additional rate case expense. Mr. Friedman, I think you should be sensitive to that also, and your client should be sensitive. And I have no reason to believe they are not sensitive to the fact that rate case expense can have an impact upon customers. And my only request is that if we do not make a bench decision and we carry forward, that you take that into consideration and be expeditious in preparing that legal argument.

I don't want you to do anything second rate, that is

not what I am asking you to do, but just be conscious of the impact upon customers. That is just a request from the bench, one Commissioner speaking. But, Commissioners, I would open it up for your comments, as well, and take it from there as to how we should proceed. But I just felt like I should at least initially indicate what my reaction is.

COMMISSIONER DAVIDSON: Thank you, Chairman. I agree with and echo your comments. I do believe that we have the authority to issue a bench decision today. I'm not going to recommend that or move that, but I do believe we have that authority. I do believe it would be prudential. I believe that a bench decision would be sustained. But I also understand counsel's reliance on a prehearing order that suggested, at least in counsel's view, they had a right to file a brief on this issue.

That said, I do believe the prehearing officer and the Commission generally has the inherent authority, as recognized in the order, to modify the prehearing order and provide for a bench decision. Again, I'm not going to do that.

My own view on this issue and hopefully you can address this in the briefs, is that under general principles of business law and corporate liability, including well-established piercing the corporate veil principles, it is my view that Highvest; based on the record developed so far, that Highvest and L.P. can be held legally responsible for the

refunds that are due from Woodlands. But, again, that will be addressed in the briefs.

I say that to sort of let the parties know where I stand right now on that issue, but I would also like to emphasize the rate case expense issue. The Commission has the broadest discretion to award rate case expense. And, again, I believe that we could decide this case today here and now, and could have a sustainable decision that would withstand an appeal. But, again, it is for the parties to brief that issue.

But unless there is something really compelling that is put forth in those briefs, as I sit here today, I am not of the mind that substantial rate case expense should be added into this proceeding. Those are my comments.

COMMISSIONER DEASON: Thank you.

Commissioner Bradley, do you have anything to add?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY: Yes. I think that my

colleagues have pretty much summed up the issues as it relates

to this particular case. And also I would admonish counsel to

be prudent and to be mindful of the fact that additional legal

action can result in additional cost to the customers. And I,

by all means, would ask you to be prudent and to do as prudent

of a job as you can as it relates to not escalating that

particular fee. That is my primary concern.

Also I agree that this Commission or this panel does have the authority to issue a bench decision. But in an

attempt to be fair to everyone here today, and to give everyone
an equal opportunity to maybe come up with some additional
information that maybe has not been presented here today, I
will concur with my colleagues and not agree to a bench
decision.

But, again, my concern is that this case does not escalate in terms of the expense to the customers in terms of the fees, the legal fees. And with that, I'm finished.

COMMISSIONER DEASON: Thank you, Commissioner.

I take it then that we are not going have a bench decision. But I want to thank staff for bringing that to our attention as a possibility. I think it is your responsibility to do that. If you feel that you are in a position to make an oral recommendation, that you should do that. And it is just something that is presented -- it is an option presented to the Commissioners. Options to Commissioners, that is a good thing. We like to have that, so we appreciate that. But we are not going to take advantage of that opportunity this time.

But I would encourage you in future prehearing conferences, and we may want to look at our standard language that we incorporate in prehearing orders, to make it clear that the Commission always retains the discretion to make a bench decision. I think that that would be good for the parties to understand that, and it would probably highlight the need to discuss that at the prehearing conference.

I'm sure that the majority of cases before the Commission probably do not lend themself to bench decisions, due to the voluminous nature of the issues and the complexity of the issues. This was a PAA procedure, there were a limited number of issues that were protested. Cases of this sort may lend themselves to bench decisions, if it is clear to all the parties that that is contemplated. And so that is something for future consideration.

MR. HARRIS: I would ask one thing, Commissioners, and this would be for Mr. Friedman. The item I submitted through Mr. Lovelette was rate case expense, the updated thing. I would ask perhaps we get the utility to file, or the Commission order the utility to file an updated accounting of rate case expense through today's hearing. That would help staff in the preparation of a recommendation for you all, since we are going to be going to recommendations. If we can get updated information as to actual rate case expense through today, and then an estimate of what will be required through briefing and the agenda conference it would be very helpful.

COMMISSIONER DAVIDSON: I can move that.

COMMISSIONER DEASON: Mr. Friedman, can you file a late-filed exhibit updating rate case expense? Through today's hearing, is that what you're requesting, Counsel?

MR. HARRIS: Actual through today, and then an estimated through the remainder of the case.

1	MR. FRIEDMAN: I can certainly do that. I'm trying
2	to remember what the one I filed I just filed last week,
3	which would have been through April.
4	MR. HARRIS: The exhibit was actual through April, I
5	believe.
6	MR. FRIEDMAN: Through April, but it would have had
7	the May well, it may not have had May.
8	UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Estimated May.
9	MR. FRIEDMAN: Okay. Well, May was not all
10	estimated. I mean, some of it was actual. Because we only
11	bill once a month. Some of it was I went through my time slips
12	and got what I had actually done through that date, and then I
13	estimated the rest. But, I mean, I can
14	COMMISSIONER DEASON: If you can update it, fine.
15	And if it does not need updating, just file something
16	indicating that the exhibit already in evidence is accurate.
17	MR. FRIEDMAN: It should be easier for me if we get
18	it by the end of the month. I don't know if that makes a whole
19	lot of difference.
20	MR. HARRIS: The end of the month is through May
21	31st.
22	MR. FRIEDMAN: Well, that is two days
23	MR. HARRIS: That is two days from now.
24	MR. FRIEDMAN: If we can do it through the end of May
25	it would be easier, I think.

1	(Simultaneous conversation.)
2	COMMISSIONER DEASON: I think he has agreed to update
3	it through the end of May.
4	MR. FRIEDMAN: When in June would you like it? I
5	mean, I don't think I can get it to you June 1st. It's a
6	Sunday. The 2nd and 3rd I'm in Tallahassee, but I certainly
7	can do it by that Friday, whatever next Friday is.
8	COMMISSIONER BRADLEY: And I will second the motion.
9	MR. HARRIS: I believe that is June 8th. June 6th,
10	I'm sorry. So if we could have it by June 6th.
11	COMMISSIONER DEASON: We are going to have a
12	late-filed exhibit, and it will be Hearing Exhibit Number 6.
13	It will be an update of rate case expense through May 31st.
14	And Staff is looking for that exhibit to be filed the first
15	Friday in June.
16	MR. FRIEDMAN: That's fine. The 6th?
17	COMMISSIONER DEASON: I believe it is the 5th of
18	June.
19	(Late-filed Exhibit 6 marked for identification.)
20	MR. HARRIS: That would be June 6th, 2003.
21	COMMISSIONER BRADLEY: Do we need a motion in order
22	to
23	COMMISSIONER DEASON: I think we can just take care
24	of it. In fact, counsel has agreed to do that, and we will
25	just go ahead and list it as an issue. I mean, we will just

1 list it as a late-filed exhibit. 2 COMMISSIONER BRADLEY: I will withdraw the second. COMMISSIONER DEASON: Staff, do you have anything 3 4 further at this point? 5 MR. HARRIS: Nothing further other than the note that 6 according to the case schedule that is out, the briefs will be 7 due on June the 18th, 2003, and we are currently scheduled for 8 a staff recommendation to be filed July 24th, 2003, with an 9 agenda conference on August the 5th. 2003. COMMISSIONER DEASON: Okay. Mr. Burgess, do you have 10 11 anything at this point? 12 MR. BURGESS: Nothing further from us. 13 COMMISSIONER DEASON: Mr. Friedman, do you have --14 MR. FRIEDMAN: Nothing further. 15 COMMISSIONER DEASON: Okay. Commissioners, anything? 16 Let me take this opportunity, once again, to thank everyone for 17 your participation. We accomplished a lot for a one day -- we 18 went through a lot in one day. We appreciate the customers, 19 your patience with us, and for your attendance at the hearing. 20 And with that, this hearing is adjourned. 21 (The hearing concluded at 6:35 p.m.) 22 23 24

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