

Service Date: February 3, 1981

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE REGULATION
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

IN THE MATTER of the Application)	UTILITY DIVISION
by GREAT FALLS GAS COMPANY)	
to adopt increased rates for gas)	DOCKET NO. 80.6.33
services .)	ORDER NO. 4741

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INTERIM RATE ORDER

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FINDINGS OF FACT

1. On June 5, 1980, Great Falls Gas Company (Applicant) applied to the Commission for authority to increase rates charged for natural gas service. The proposed tariffs filed with the application would increase billings to Great Falls Gas customers by \$498,459 over those of the test year.

2. In the original application, the Applicant applied to the Commission for an interim rate increase in the full amount of \$498,459 subject to rebate upon issuance of a final order.

3. On January 8 and 9, 1981, the Commission conducted a hearing in Great Falls, Montana on Applicant's requested rate increase.

4. In prefiled testimony, Intervenor Montana Consumer Counsel through its witness, Frank Buckley, stated that an increase of \$172,160 in annual revenue would be justified in this case.

5. At the hearing the Applicant conceded that \$87,129 of additional revenues were being collected under rates authorized by Order No. 4602b and were not reflected in the original filing.

6. At the conclusion of the hearing, Applicant renewed its request for interim relief.

7. Montana Consumer Counsel stated that it had no objection to an interim order based upon its prefiled revenue requirement less the additional revenues conceded by the Applicant.

8. Montana Consumer Counsel stated that it had no objection to an interim order based upon its conceded revenue requirement and implementing a lifeline rate structure for the Residential Class as proposed by the Applicant.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Great Falls Gas Company is a public utility furnishing natural gas service to consumers in the state of Montana. As such it is subject to the supervision, regulation and control of this Commission, Section 69-3-102, MCA.

2. Section 69-3-304, MCA, provides in part, "The Commission may in its discretion, temporarily approve increases pending a hearing or final decision. "

3. The Commission concludes that an interim rate increase based upon the amount of additional revenue and rate structure stipulated to by the parties at the general rate increase hearing is a reasonable means of providing interim relief to the Applicant.

4. If the final decision of the Commission is to disapprove the increase granted on an interim basis, the Commission will order a rebate thereof to all consumers, Section 39-3-304, MCA.

ORDER

THEREFORE, THE MONTANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION ORDERS THAT:

1. The Great Falls Gas Company is hereby granted authority to implement on an interim basis increased rates designed to generate an additional \$85,031 revenue on an annual basis.
2. The Great Fall Gas Company is to file revised rate schedules spreading the increased revenues to the existing customer classes on a uniform percentage increase basis.
3. Nothing in this Interim Order precludes the Commission from adopting in its final order after reviewing the entire record in this docket, a revenue requirement or rate structure different from that contained in this Order.
4. The interim relief granted in this Order is to be effective for service rendered on and after January 26, 1981.

DONE IN OPEN SESSION this 26th day of January, 1981, by a vote of 5-0.

DOCKET NO. 80.6.33, ORDER NO. 4741

BY ORDER OF THE MONTANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION.

GORDON E. BOLLINGER, Chairman

JOHN B. DRISCOLL, Commissioner

HOWARD L. ELLIS, Commissioner

CLYDE JARVIS, Commissioner

THOMAS J. SCHNEIDER, Commissioner

ATTEST:

Madeline L. Cottrill
Secretary

(SEAL)

NOTE:

An order of the Commission approving or denying a temporary rate increase is an intermediate agency action subject to judicial review under the Montana Administrative Procedures Act.