

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

\* \* \* \*

|                                      |   |                       |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| IN THE MATTER OF CUT BANK GAS        | ) | UTILITY DIVISION      |
| COMPANY Application for General Rate | ) |                       |
| Increase                             | ) | DOCKET NO. D2006.2.15 |
|                                      | ) | ORDER NO. 6720a       |

**INTERIM ORDER**

**Findings of Fact**

1. On February 6, 2006, Cut Bank Gas Company (CBG) filed for increased rates for natural gas service in its customer service area. In its application, CBG requested interim rate relief in the amount of \$155,615.00 to be collected from customers by decreasing the commodity cost of natural gas by \$0.1575 and an increase in the monthly service charge to \$18.02 from its present \$7.55.

2. On March 21, 2006, the Montana Public Service Commission determined that interim rate relief in the amount of \$77,807.50 is appropriate given that at the issuance of this order there is no intervenor testimony received (nor due) and the fact that the Commission recognizes the expedience of some rate relief to the company is necessary and prudent. The Commission believes that this interim rate relief should follow past practices and be apportioned between the monthly service charge and the commodity costs as a uniform percentage increase.

**CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

1. Cut Bank Gas Company provides natural gas service within the State of Montana and as such is a “public utility” within the meaning of § 69-3-101, MCA.

2. The Montana Public Service Commission properly exercises jurisdiction over the CBG’s rates and operations pursuant to Title 69, Chapter 3, MCA.

3. The Commission may at its discretion, within the scope of § 69-3-304, MCA, make temporary approvals of requests pending a hearing or final decision.

4. The rate levels and spread approved in this Order are a reasonable means of providing interim relief to MPC. The rebate provisions of § 69-3-304, MCA, protect ratepayers until there is a final Order in this Docket.

### **ORDER**

THEREFORE THE MONTANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION ORDERS THAT:

1. CBG shall implement, on an interim basis, rates to reflect a revenue increase of \$77,807.50 as a uniform percentage increase to both the commodity and service charges.

2. CBG shall adhere to and abide by all Findings of Fact in this Interim Order. All rate schedules shall comply with all determinations set forth in this Interim Order.

3. CBG must file tariffs in compliance with the Findings of Fact in this Interim Order.

4. Nothing in this Order precludes the Commission from adopting in its Final Order a revenue requirement different from that contained in this Interim Order.

5. Any interest associated with a refund that might result from the final revenue increase granted in this Order will be computed at the approved return on equity granted in the Final Order.

6. Interim approval of any matters in this proceeding should not be viewed as final endorsement by the Commission of any issues, calculations, or methodologies approved in this Order.

7. This Interim Order is effective for service on and after March 22, 2006.

DONE IN OPEN SESSION at Helena, Montana on this 21<sup>st</sup> day of March, 2006, by a 5 to 0 vote.

BY ORDER OF THE MONTANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

---

GREG JERGESON, Chairman

---

BRAD MOLNAR, Vice Chairman

---

DOUG MOOD, Commissioner

---

BOB RANEY, Commissioner

---

THOMAS J. SCHNEIDER, Commissioner

ATTEST:

Connie Jones  
Commission Secretary

(SEAL)

NOTE: Any interested party may request the Commission to reconsider this decision. A motion to reconsider must be filed within ten (10) days. See 38.2.4806, ARM.