

# TENNESSEE REGULATORY AUTHORITY

Sara Kyle, Chairman  
Lynn Greer, Director  
Melvin Malone, Director



460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0505

## VIA EMAIL

June 28, 2001

Ms. Patricia J. Childers  
Manager-Rates & Regulatory Affairs  
United Cities Gas Company  
810 Crescent Centre Drive, Suite 600  
Franklin, Tennessee 37067-6226

RE: Docket No. 01-00147 – Natural Gas Billing Policy Review.

Dear Ms. Childers:

The Staff of the TRA is continuing to review the contingency plans developed by the major local distribution companies. We plan to compile this information and report to the Directors on how the local distribution companies are preparing for the 2001-2002 heating season.

We request that you provide responses to the attached questions related to Customer Information, Service Policy and Billing Plans by July 10, 2001. Your responses (14 copies) should be directed to me.

If you have any questions, please contact Mike Horne, Energy and Water Division, at 1-800-342-8359, Ext. 174.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Waddell".

David Waddell  
Executive Secretary

DW:blp

Enclosure

gasforum-summit/meh01-63RUucg

**Customer Information** – is defined as providing information to customers which covers a wide range of informational, educational and public service materials that would assist customers in dealing with higher than expected gas prices during the heating season. This information can be provided by a variety of means, such as mailers, newspapers, television, and website services. The information would include energy tips, contacts at agencies that provide assistance and general information on the effects of gas prices. Relating to Customer Information:

- Would you explain what measures your company took to provide Customer Information before and during last winter's heating season?
- Would you tell us what lessons were learned during last winter's heating season and what improvements you would make to better inform customers this year?
- Could you tell us what aspects of the Customer Information program worked the best last year?
- What is your company's action plan to better inform customers about the coming heating season? Could you provide a timetable for these efforts?

**Service Policy** – is the standard company policy for termination of service due to non-payment of bills. It would cover when service can be terminated, under what conditions service will not be terminated, the amount of time allowed for billing, how final notices are issued, the termination process and what charges and discounts are forfeited if service is terminated. The service policy would also include the contingency plan developed by your company last winter and the associated activities involving customer contacts, like telephone, walk-ins, and other methods of contact. Relating to this Service Policy:

- Would you explain your standard company policy for termination of service for non-payment? Then explain what measures or changes were made to this policy before and during last winter's heating season?
- Would you tell us what lessons were learned during last winter's heating season and what improvements you would make to the contingency plan to correct these problem areas?
- Could you tell us what aspects of the plan worked the best last year?
- Does your company plan to continue this contingency plan for the coming heating season? If not, why not? If so, are all aspects of the plan in place? If not, what is the company's timetable for these efforts?

**Billing Plans** – are optional payment plans that allow customers to make payment for service other than the standard billing form. This would include budget, leveled or annual average bill options that allow a customer to pay for service over time (typically 12 months). It also would include special payment options that allow customers to make payments over a defined number of months. Relating to these billing plans:

- Would you outline your company's current budget-billing program? And explain what changes were made to this plan before and during last winter's heating season? Provide an outline of the special payment options that were developed as part of the contingency plans last winter. Include the restrictions and requirements of the plan in your outline.
- Would you tell us what lessons were learned during last winter's heating season and what changes you would make to these plans to correct any problem areas this year?
- Could you tell us what aspects of the plans worked the best last year?
- Will your company continue these Billing Plans during the coming heating season? If not, why not? If so, are all aspects of the plans in place? If not what is the company's timetable for these efforts?