

BEFORE THE TENNESSEE REGULATORY AUTHORITY

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

March 1, 2017

IN RE:	)	
	)	
PETITION OF PIEDMONT NATURAL GAS	)	DOCKET NO.
COMPANY FOR APPROVAL OF AN INTEGRITY	)	16-00140
MANAGEMENT RIDER TO ITS APPROVED RATE	)	
SCHEDULES AND SERVICE REGULATIONS	)	

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ORDER ESTABLISHING PROCEDURAL SCHEDULE

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This matter came before the Hearing Officer of the Tennessee Regulatory Authority (“Authority” or “TRA”) to establish a procedural schedule for the orderly administration of these proceedings. The goal and design of any procedural schedule is to efficiently move the proceedings forward to a hearing and final conclusion on the merits. Nevertheless, a procedural schedule’s effectiveness directly depends on cooperation by the parties in meeting the individual benchmark dates.

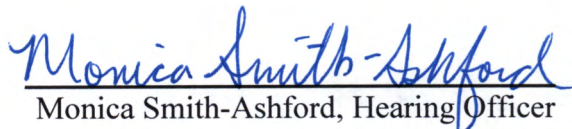
**RELEVANT BACKGROUND**

In order to establish a procedural schedule, the Hearing Officer requested that the parties submit a joint proposed procedural schedule; however, the parties were unable to reach an agreement. On January 27, 2017, Piedmont Gas Company (“Piedmont” or the “Company”) filed a proposed procedural schedule (“Piedmont’s Proposed Schedule”) and the Consumer Protection and Advocate Division of the Office of the Attorney General (“Consumer Advocate”) filed a *Response to Petitioner’s Motion to adopt a Procedural Schedule and Motion by the Consumer Advocate to Adopt its Proposed Procedural Schedule Attached Herewith* (“Response”).

Piedmont's Proposed Schedule provided for a target hearing date of March 13, 2017, and for the Company's rebuttal testimony to be filed on February 27, 2017. According to Piedmont, the parties were unable to reach agreement because the Consumer Advocate expressed concern about being able to meet the deadlines in Piedmont's Proposed Schedule and also wanted to build in time for settlement discussions.<sup>1</sup> In its *Response*, the Consumer Advocate asserts that "an April 2017 hearing date is the only practicable way that this case can proceed with reasonable timelines and opportunity for analysis."<sup>2</sup> According to the Consumer Advocate, Piedmont's Proposed Schedule "fails to allow for adequate discovery and analysis of that discovery, it fails to allow for time to engage in settlement discussions, and it fails to allow adequate time to prepare testimony."<sup>3</sup>

The Hearing Officer conducted a telephone conference with the parties on February 3, 2017, to discuss the procedural schedule. During the telephone conference, the parties reiterated many of the arguments set forth in Piedmont's Proposed Schedule and the Consumer Advocate's *Response*. After considering the arguments of the parties, the Hearing Officer declined to adopt the proposed procedural schedule of either party. The Hearing Officer adopted a procedural schedule that would allow adequate time for the parties to conduct discovery, file pre-filed and rebuttal testimony, and to participate in settlement discussions and if necessary, conduct a hearing on the merits within a reasonable timeframe. The procedural schedule adopted by the Hearing Officer is set forth as **Exhibit A** attached to this Order.

**IT IS SO ORDERED.**

  
Monica Smith-Ashford, Hearing Officer

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<sup>1</sup> See Piedmont's Proposed Schedule, p. 1 (January 27, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> *Response*, p. 3 (January 27, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

**DOCKET No. 16-00140**  
**PROCEDURAL SCHEDULE**

March 1, 2017

<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Filing</b>
January 30, 2017	Piedmont Pre-filed Testimony
February 6, 2017	Consumer Advocate Discovery Requests (Copies of all discovery exchanged between the parties shall be filed with the Authority within 3 days of the exchange of information. All spreadsheets shall be filed in Excel format with working formulas intact.)
February 13, 2017	Piedmont Responses to Consumer Advocate Requests
February 16, 2017	Motion to Compel (if needed)
February 20, 2017	Response to Motion to Compel
By February 24, 2017	1st Formal Settlement Meeting (negotiations not limited to formal meetings)
March 2, 2017	Consumer Advocate Pre-filed Testimony
March 6, 2017	Piedmont Discovery Requests
March 10, 2017	Consumer Advocate Discovery Responses
March 20, 2017	Piedmont Pre-filed Rebuttal Testimony*
March 22, 2017	Pre-hearing Motions
By March 27, 2017	2 <sup>nd</sup> Formal Settlement Meeting (negotiations not limited to formal meetings)
March 29, 2017	Pre-Hearing Conference (by phone if preferred)
Target Date: April 10, 2017	Hearing on the Merits

\* Rebuttal Testimony should be limited only to issues raised in the Consumer Advocate's Direct Testimony and should include the page and line number of the Consumer Advocate's testimony that is being rebutted.

**EXHIBIT A**