

BEFORE THE TENNESSEE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

August 20, 2021

IN RE:

**CHATTANOOGA GAS COMPANY ACTUAL COST
ADJUSTMENT (ACA) FILING FOR THE PERIOD OF
JULY 1, 2019 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2020**

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**DOCKET NO.
20-00112**

**ORDER ADOPTING ACA AUDIT REPORT OF
TENNESSEE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION’S UTILITIES DIVISION**

This matter came before Chairman Kenneth C. Hill, Vice Chairman Herbert H. Hilliard, Commissioner Robin L. Morrison, Commissioner John Hie, and Commissioner David F. Jones, of the Tennessee Public Utility Commission (the “Commission” or “TPUC”), the voting panel assigned to this docket, during a regularly scheduled Commission Conference held on July 13, 2021 to consider the report of the Commission’s Utilities Division (the “Staff”) resulting from the Staff’s audit of Chattanooga Gas Company (“CGC” or the “Company”) annual deferred gas cost account filing for the period ended June 30, 2020. The Actual Cost Adjustment (“ACA”) Compliance Audit Report (the “Report”) is attached hereto as Exhibit 1 and incorporated by this reference.

The Company filed its ACA filing on September 23, 2020. The objective of the audit was to verify that the Company’s calculations of gas costs incurred and recovered were materially correct and that the Company has followed all Commission orders and directives with respect to the ACA account balance. The original 180-day deadline for staff’s completion of the audit, which may be extended by mutual agreement, was March 22, 2021.¹

¹ See Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. 1220-04-07-.03(2).

The Company and Staff agreed to extend the audit deadline to June 30, 2021 and further to July 31, 2021 by mutual consent of CGC and TPUC Staff as provided for in the Purchase Gas Adjustment Rule 1220-04-07-.03(2) and evidenced by Staff memos filed in this Docket on March 17, 2021 and June 10, 2021.

The Staff completed its audit of the Company's filing and filed its Report on June 30, 2021. The Audit Staff reported four findings which resulted in reducing the Company's reported ending balance of \$2,488,649.95 by \$287,635.32. The net under-recovery amount of \$287,635.32 reported by Staff is composed of the findings as described following. The first finding resulted from the Company's overstatement of its Commodity gas costs and Demand gas costs for the months of April and June 2020. Staff discovered that the gas cost amounts reflected on the monthly invoice summary reports did not tie to the actual invoices attached to support the summaries. The result was that CGC recorded greater amounts of gas costs in the ACA Account than was purchased for these months. Commodity gas cost over-recovery was \$1,119.60 and Demand cost over-recovery was \$5,000.

The second finding resulted from the use of incorrect rates in the Company's worksheets that calculated the CSS storage activity. Injection rate errors occurred in October 2019 and May 2020. Also, one error occurred in the Cashout calculation for the production month of October 2019. The net result of these errors was a decrease of \$11,770.31 in the reported storage inventory balance, which represents an under-recovery of gas costs.

The third finding reports that the Company inadvertently reversed the plus and minus mathematical signs for three separate items in the Inventory Activity calculations. Those three items were: CSS Cashout, CSS Transfer and FSPA Transfer. The result was a \$276,710.61 decrease in the Inventory Activity charged to the ACA Account. This represents an under-recovery of gas costs.

The fourth audit report finding corrects the amount of interest due to customers in the ACA Account. Once Staff corrected the monthly ending balances in the ACA Account related to Findings 1, 2, and 3, it was necessary to recalculate the amount of interest that is calculated based on those ending balances. The result was a decrease of \$5,274 due to customers. This represents an under-recovery of gas costs.

Based on the Company's filing, the ending balance in the ACA Account at June 30, 2020, was \$2,488,649.95 in over-collected gas costs. Staff's corrected ending balance is \$2,201,014.63 in over-collected gas costs² at the end of the review period. This amount will become the beginning balance in the next ACA audit. CGC has agreed with Staff's Findings. As referenced above, the Company's calculated over-recovery is currently being refunded to customers in their monthly rates. The next true-up of gas costs incurred versus gas cost recovered will cover the period July 2020 through June 2021.

During the regularly scheduled Commission Conference held on July 13, 2021, the voting panel considered the Company's ACA filing and Staff's Compliance Audit Report. The panel unanimously approved the Compliance Audit Report as filed.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:

1. The Actual Cost Adjustment Compliance Audit Report relative to Chattanooga Gas Company, Inc.'s gas costs for the period ended June 30, 2020, a copy of which is attached to this Order as Exhibit 1, is approved and adopted and the conclusions and recommendations contained therein are incorporated in this Order as if fully rewritten herein.

2. Chattanooga Gas Company, Inc. corrected ending balance in the actual cost adjustment ACA account at June 30, 2020 is \$2,201,014.63 in over-collected gas costs as corrected

² The net ending balance in the ACA Account at June 30, 2020, is the sum of negative \$2,715,973.44 in over-collected Commodity costs and positive \$514,958.81 in under-collected Demand costs. Exh. 1, p.5.

by the Tennessee Public Utility Commission Staff.

3. Any person who is aggrieved by the Commission's decision in this matter may file a Petition for Reconsideration with the Commission within fifteen (15) days from the date of this Order.

4. Any person who is aggrieved by the Commission's decision in this matter has the right to judicial review by filing a Petition for Review in the Tennessee Court of Appeals, Middle Section, within sixty (60) days from the date of this Order.

FOR THE TENNESSEE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION:

**Chairman Kenneth C. Hill,
Vice Chairman Herbert H. Hilliard
Commissioner Robin L. Morrison
Commissioner John Hie, and
Commissioner David F. Jones concurring.**

None dissenting.

ATTEST:



Earl R. Taylor, Executive Director

EXHIBIT 1

EXHIBIT A

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

OF

Chattanooga Gas Company

ACTUAL COST ADJUSTMENT

DOCKET NO. 20-00112

PREPARED BY

TENNESSEE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

UTILITIES DIVISION

June 2021

EXHIBIT A

**COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT
of the
ACTUAL COST ADJUSTMENT COMPONENT
of the
PURCHASED GAS ADJUSTMENT RULE
for
CHATTANOOGA GAS COMPANY
for the Year ended June 30, 2020**

Docket No. 20-00112

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I. INTRODUCTION

The subject of this audit is Chattanooga Gas Company's ("Company," "Chattanooga," or "CGC") compliance with the Actual Cost Adjustment and Refund Adjustment of the Purchased Gas Adjustment Rule ("PGA Rule") of the Tennessee Public Utility Commission ("TPUC" or the "Commission")¹. The objective of the audit is to determine whether the purchased gas adjustments, which are encompassed by the Actual Cost Adjustment ("ACA"), as more fully described in Section VI., for the twelve months ended June 30, 2020, are calculated correctly in accordance with all TPUC rules, orders, and directives applicable to Chattanooga and are supported by appropriate source documentation.

II. AUDIT OPINION

Audit Staff's ("Staff") audit resulted in four (4) findings.² The net amount of these findings is \$287,635.32 in under-recovered³ gas costs. The Company's reported June 30, 2020 balance of negative \$2,488,649.95 in over-collected gas costs is decreased by the \$287,635.32 under-collected gas costs determined in this audit. The corrected balance in the ACA account at June 30, 2020 is negative \$2,201,014.63 in over-recovered gas costs. These findings represent less than one percent of the total gas invoices and are, therefore, immaterial by comparison.

Staff concludes that, except for the findings noted in this report, the Purchased Gas Adjustment mechanism, as calculated in the Actual Cost Adjustment, appears to be working properly and in accordance with the TPUC rules for Chattanooga Gas Company.

III. SUMMARY OF COMPANY FILING

The ACA filing showed \$28,965,483.86 in total gas costs, with \$28,126,540.41 being recovered from customers through rates. Adding a beginning balance in the Deferred Gas Cost Account ("ACA Account") of negative \$3,212,506.40 in over-recovered gas costs from the preceding ACA period and interest owed to customers for the current period of \$115,087.00 (represented as a negative number) resulted in an ACA Account balance at June 30, 2020 of negative \$2,488,649.95 in over-recovered gas costs. The Company's filing is summarized on the following page.

¹ As of April 5, 2017, the name of Tennessee Regulatory Authority has changed to the Tennessee Public Utility Commission and board members of the agency will be known as Commissioners rather than Directors.

² Refer to Section VIII for a description of the findings.

³ Over-recovered means that the Company over-collected its gas costs from customers. Likewise, an under-recovery means that the Company under-collected its gas costs from customers. The words "recovery" and "collection" may be used interchangeably in the report.

**CHATTANOOGA GAS COMPANY
ACA FILING FOR PERIOD JULY 2019-JUNE 2020**

Line

1	Beginning Balance (July 2019)	(\$3,212,506.40)
2	Plus Purchased Gas Costs	28,965,483.86
3	Minus Gas Costs recovered through rates	28,126,540.41
4	Plus Interest on monthly balances	<u>(\$115,087.00)</u>
5	Ending Balance (June 2020) (Line 1 + Line 2 – Line 3 + Line 4)	<u>(\$2,488,649.95)</u>

A () around a number indicates a negative or credit balance in the ACA Account, which represents an over-recovery of gas costs. Over-recoveries result in a refund due to customers.

IV. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON COMPANY

Chattanooga Gas Company, located at 6125 Preservation Drive in Chattanooga, Tennessee, is a wholly owned subsidiary of Southern Company Gas⁴, a holding company formed in 2000 in response to the Public Utility Holding Company Act (PUCHA) of 1935. Southern Company Gas is located at Ten Peachtree Place, Atlanta, Georgia. As a local distribution company (“LDC”), Chattanooga provides service to customers in Chattanooga and Cleveland, Tennessee, and environs in Hamilton and Bradley Counties in Tennessee, respectively. The natural gas used to serve these areas is purchased from various suppliers and transported via three natural gas pipelines in accordance with separate and individual tariffs approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The three interstate pipelines are Tennessee Gas Pipeline (TGP), East Tennessee Natural Gas (ETNG), and Southern Natural Gas (SNG).

V. JURISDICTION OF THE TENNESSEE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

Tennessee law provides broad jurisdiction and control over public utilities to the Tennessee Public Utility Commission. Tenn. Code Ann. § 65-4-104 states:

The authority has general supervisory and regulatory power, jurisdiction, and control over all public utilities, and also over their property, property rights,

⁴ Formerly known as AGL Resources, Inc.

facilities, and franchises, so far as may be necessary for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this chapter.

Further, Tenn. Code Ann. § 65-4-105 grants the same power to the Commission with reference to all public utilities within its jurisdiction as Tenn. Code Ann., Title 65. Chapters 3 and 5 confer oversight of the railroads to the Department of Transportation or oversight of transportation companies to the Department of Safety. By virtue of Tenn. Code Ann. § 65-3-108, said power includes the right to audit:

The department of transportation is given full power to examine the books and papers of the companies, and to examine, under oath, the officers, agents, and employees of the companies... to procure the necessary information to intelligently and justly discharge its duties and carry out the provisions of this chapter and chapter 5 of this title.

The Utilities Division of the TPUC is responsible for auditing those companies under the Commission's jurisdiction to ensure that each company is abiding by Tennessee statutes as well as the Rules and Regulations of the Commission. Emily Qingshe of the Utilities Division conducted this audit.

VI. DESCRIPTION OF PURCHASED GAS ADJUSTMENT RULE

Actual Cost Adjustment Audits:

The PGA Rule can be found in Chapter 1220-4-7 of the Rules of the Tennessee Regulatory Authority, now the Tennessee Public Utility Commission. The PGA Rule permits the Company to recover, in a timely fashion, the total cost of gas purchased for delivery to its customers and to assure that the Company does not over-collect or under-collect gas costs from its customers.

The PGA consists of three major components:

- 1. The Actual Cost Adjustment (hereafter the "ACA")**
- 2. The Gas Charge Adjustment (hereafter the "GCA")**
- 3. The Refund Adjustment (hereafter the "RA")**

The ACA is the difference between the revenues billed customers by means of the GCA and the cost of gas invoiced the Company by suppliers plus margin loss (if allowed by order of the TPUC in another docket) as reflected in the Deferred Gas Cost account. The ACA then "true-up" the difference between the actual gas costs and the gas costs recovered from customers through a surcharge or a refund. The RA refunds the "true-up" along with other supplier refunds. For a more complete definition of the GCA and RA, please see the PGA Formula in Appendix A of this Report.

Section 1220-4-7-.03 (2) of the PGA Rule requires:

“Each year, the Company shall file with the Authority an annual report reflecting the transactions in the Deferred Gas Cost Account. Unless the Authority provides written notification to the Company within one hundred eighty (180) days from the date of filing the report, the Deferred Gas Cost Adjustment Account shall be deemed in compliance with the provisions of these Rules. This 180-day notification period may be extended by mutual consent of the Company and the Authority Staff or by order of the Authority.”

Prudence Audit of Gas Purchases:

Section 1220-4-7-.05 of the PGA Rule requires, unless otherwise ordered by the Commission, an audit of Prudence of Gas Purchases by a qualified consultant. This specialized audit evaluates and reports annually on the prudence of any gas costs included in the PGA. At its September 11, 2001 Authority Conference, the Directors voted to approve a Performance-Based Ratemaking Mechanism (“PBRM”) for Chattanooga (Docket No. 01-00619). The mechanism affects all plan years ending after June 30, 2000 and continues each year unless terminated by the Company or the Commission. For each year that the mechanism is in effect, if CGC’s total commodity gas purchases are less than 1% above the total annual benchmark, its purchases are deemed prudent and the requirements of Section 1220-4-7-.05 of the PGA Rule are waived. Staff reviewed these gas purchases as part of the Compliance Audit in Docket No. 20-00113. Staff’s Audit Report, which was filed under the docket on June 17, 2021, stated that the Company met the requirements of its tariff and recommended that the Company be released from the prudence audit.

VII. SCOPE OF ACTUAL COST ADJUSTMENT AUDIT

The ACA audit is a compliance audit of the Company’s ACA Account. The audit goal is to verify that the Company’s calculations of gas costs incurred and recovered are materially correct,⁵ and that the Company is following all Commission rules, orders and directives with respect to its calculation of the ACA Account balance. On August 31, 2020, the Company filed a PGA⁶ to change the ACA factor to begin refunding the unaudited balance in the ACA Account at June 30, 2020, effective October 1, 2020.

To accomplish the audit goal, Staff reviewed gas supply invoices, as well as supplemental schedules and other source documentation provided by Chattanooga. Where appropriate, Staff requested additional information to clarify the filing.

⁵ The audit goal is not to guarantee that the Company’s results are 100% correct. Where it is appropriate, Staff utilizes sampling techniques to determine whether the Company’s calculations are materially correct. Material discrepancies would dictate a broadening of the scope of Staff’s review.

⁶ Tariff Filing No. 2020-0053.

VIII. ACA FINDINGS

The result of the Staff's audit was a net **under-recovery of \$287,635.32** which has the effect of decreasing the Company's over-recovered balance at June 30, 2020 by this amount. A summary of the account as filed by the Company and as adjusted by the Staff is shown below, followed by a detailed description of each finding.

SUMMARY OF THE ACA ACCOUNT:

	Company	Staff	Difference (Findings)
Commodity Balance at 6/30/19	(\$2,960,135.84)	(\$2,960,135.84)	\$ 0.00
Plus Gas Costs	14,998,782.99	14,997,663.39	(1,119.60)
Minus Recoveries	14,896,584.91	14,608,103.99	(288,480.92)
Ending Balance before Interest	(\$2,857,937.76)	(\$2,570,576.44)	287,361.32
Plus Interest	(\$150,681.00)	(\$145,397.00)	5,284.00
Commodity Balance at 6/30/20	(\$3,008,618.76)	(\$2,715,973.44)	\$292,645.32
Demand Balance at 6/30/19	(\$252,370.86)	(\$252,370.86)	\$ 0.00
Plus Gas Costs	13,966,700.87	13,961,700.87	(5,000.00)
Minus Recoveries	13,229,955.20	13,229,955.20	0.00
Ending Balance before Interest	\$484,374.81	\$479,374.81	(\$5,000.00)
Plus Interest	\$35,594.00	\$35,584.00	(10.00)
Demand Balance at 6/30/20	\$519,968.81	\$514,958.81	(\$5,010.00)
Total ACA Ending Balance at 6/30/20	(\$2,488,649.95)	(\$2,201,014.63)	\$287,635.32

Note: The negative Ending Balance number indicates an over-recovery of gas costs.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

			See page
FINDING #1	Gas Costs- Commodity and Demand	(6,119.60)	Over-recovery 6
FINDING #2	CSS Storage -Commodity	11,770.31	Under-recovery 7
FINDING #3	Inventory Activity-Commodity	276,710.61	Under-recovery 8
FINDING #4	Interest-Commodity and Demand	5,274.00	Under-recovery 9

Net Result **\$ 287,635.32** **Under-recovery**

FINDING #1

Exception

The Company overstated its invoiced gas cost.

Discussion

The Company's calculation of Commodity and Demand gas costs recorded in the ACA Account was overstated. The ACA Account was debited with the amounts shown on the monthly invoice summary reports for April 2020 and June 2020. These amounts, however, did not tie to the actual invoices supplied to support the summaries. The result of these errors is an **over-recovery of \$6,119.60** in total gas costs (\$1,119.60 in Commodity gas costs plus \$5,000.00 in Demand gas costs).

Company Response

The Company concurs.

FINDING #2

Exception

The Company used incorrect rates and volumes in the CSS storage calculation summaries.

Discussion

The Company's workpapers contained two injection rate errors on the CSS storage activity calculations for the October 2019 and May 2020 monthly reports. There was also one reported error for the Cashout volumes in the production month October 2019. The result of these errors is a decrease of **\$11,770.31** in the reported storage inventory balance **(under-recovery)**.

Company Response

The Company concurs.

FINDING #3

Exception

The Company's ACA summary workpaper used incorrect mathematical signs on its Inventory Activity calculation.

Discussion

The Company's ACA workpapers reversed the plus and minus signs for three items in the Inventory Activity section: "CSS Cashout", "CSS Transfer" and "FSPA Transfer". The result of the errors is a decrease of **\$276,710.61** in the total Inventory Activity charged to the ACA Account (**under-recovery**).

Company Response

The Company concurs.

FINDING #4

Exception

The Company overstated the amount of interest due to customers in the ACA filing.

Discussion

The Company used the correct interest rates. Based on Staff's corrections discussed in Findings #1, #2 and #3, however, Staff needed to recalculate the amount of interest. The result was an overstatement of **\$5,274.00** interest due to the customers (**under-recovery**).

Company Response

The Company concurs.

IX. STAFF AUDIT CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff reviewed the gas costs and gas cost recoveries of Chattanooga Gas Company for the 12-month period ended June 30, 2020. As reported in the body of this report, Staff concludes that the Purchased Gas Adjustment mechanism, as calculated in the Actual Cost Adjustment, appears to be working properly and in accordance with the TPUC rules for CGC. Staff's audit revealed four (4) findings for the audit period with which the Company concurs. Based on the Company's filing and the audit adjustments by Staff, the net balance in the ACA Account as of June 30, 2020 is a negative \$2,201,014.63. This means that as of June 30, 2020 the Company had over-collected this amount from its customers. This balance will become the beginning balance at July 1, 2020 in the Company's next ACA filing. **Staff recommends approval of the Company's ACA Account balances, as amended by Staff.**

APPENDIX A

PGA FORMULA

The computation of the GCA can be broken down into the following formulas:

$$\text{Firm GCA} = \frac{D + DACA}{SF} - DB + \frac{P + T + SR + CACA}{ST} - CB$$

$$\text{Non-Firm GCA} = \frac{P + T + SR + CACA}{ST} - CB$$

where

GCA = The Gas Charge Adjustment in dollars per Ccf/Therm, rounded to no more than five decimal places.

D = The sum of all fixed Gas Costs.

DACA = The demand portion of the ACA.

P = The sum of all commodity/gas charges.

T = The sum of all transportation charges.

SR = The sum of all FERC approved surcharges.

CACA = The commodity portion of the ACA.

DB = The per unit rate of demand costs or other fixed charges included in base rates in the most recently completed general rate case (which may be zero if the Company so elects and the Commission so approves).

CB = The per unit rate of variable gas costs included in base rates in the most recently completed general rate case (which may be zero if the Company so elects and the Commission so approves).

SF = Firm Sales.

ST = Total Sales.

The computation of the RA can be computed using the following formulas:

$$\text{Firm RA} = \frac{\text{DR1} - \text{DR2}}{\text{SFR}} + \frac{\text{CR1} - \text{CR2} + \text{CR3} + i}{\text{STR}}$$

$$\text{Non-Firm RA} = \frac{\text{CR1} - \text{CR2} + \text{CR3} + i}{\text{STR}}$$

where

RA =	The Refund Adjustment in dollars per Ccf/Therm, rounded to no more than five decimal places.
DR1 =	Demand refund not included in a currently effective Refund Adjustment, and received from suppliers by check, wire transfer, or credit memo.
DR2 =	A demand surcharge from a supplier not includable in the GCA, and not included in a currently effective Refund Adjustment.
CR1 =	Commodity refund not included in a currently effective Refund Adjustment, and received from suppliers by check, wire transfer, or credit memo.
CR2 =	A commodity surcharge from a supplier not includable in the GCA, and not included in a currently effective Refund Adjustment.
CR3 =	The residual balance of an expired Refund Adjustment.
i =	Interest on the "Refund Due Customers" account, using the average monthly balances based on the beginning and ending monthly balances. The interest rates for each calendar quarter used to compute such interest shall be the arithmetic mean (to the nearest one-hundredth of one percent) of the prime rate value published in the "Federal Reserve Bulletin" or in the Federal Reserve's "Selected Interest Rates" for the 4th, 3rd, and 2nd months preceding the 1st month of the calendar quarter.

SFR = Firm sales as defined in the GCA computation, less sales under a transportation or negotiated rate schedule.

STR = Total sales as defined in the GCA computation, less sales under a transportation or negotiated rate schedule.