

BEFORE THE TENNESSEE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

September 1, 2021

IN RE:

**PETITION OF PIEDMONT NATURAL GAS
COMPANY, INC. FOR APPROVAL OF AN
INTEGRITY MANAGEMENT RIDER TO ITS
APPROVED RATE SCHEDULES AND SERVICE
REGULATIONS**

**DOCKET NO.
20-00130**

**ORDER RE-SUSPENDING IMR SURCHARGE RATE TARIFF
THROUGH DECEMBER 1, 2021**

This matter is before the Hearing Officer appointed by the voting panel of Commissioners of the Tennessee Public Utility Commission (“Commission” or “TPUC”) and designated by General Counsel to administer certain preliminary issues that may arise during the preparation of this matter for hearing before the Commission. On May 20, 2021, Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc. (“Piedmont” or the “Company”) filed its tariff suspending the Integrity Management Rider (“IMR”) surcharge rate pursuant to the Commission’s April 29, 2021, *Order Suspending IMR Surcharge Rate Tariff June 1, 2021 Through September 1, 2021*. According to Piedmont, the IMR deferred account balance schedules showed the fund had decreased significantly since October 31, 2020, and the Company projected the refund would be materially completed by the end of May 2021.¹ Because the IMR surcharge rates were projected to result in a balance due to the Company from customers, Piedmont requested Commission approval to remove the current IMR surcharge

¹ Letter Accompanying Piedmont Natural Gas Company’s New IMR Rates Pursuant to the Commission’s February 26, 2021 Order Filed in Docket No. 20-00086, p. 1 (March 31, 2021).

rates effective June 1, 2021, Piedmont also proposed that any balance in the IMR deferred account as of May 31, 2021, remain in that interest-bearing account until further disposition ordered by the Commission.² As a result, the Hearing Officer suspended the IMR surcharge tariff beginning June 1, 2021 through September 1, 2021.³

Tenn. Code Ann. § 65-5-103(a) permits the Commission, pending a hearing and determination, to suspend any rate increase, change, or alteration for an initial period not to exceed three months from the effective date of such increase, change, or alteration.⁴ The Hearing Officer finds that the Commission's investigation, hearing, and final determination on Piedmont's IMR filing has not been completed and continuing the current IMR rates until a final determination on the docket by the Commission will result in a balance due to the Company by ratepayers. Based on these findings, the Hearing Officer concludes it is in the public interest to re-suspend the effectiveness of the tariff through December 1, 2021.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:

1. The effective date of the tariff sheet filed by Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc. implementing the Integrity Management Rider surcharge rate is hereby re-suspended through December 1, 2021, or until further order of the Tennessee Public Utility Commission, whichever occurs sooner.

2. Any balance in the Integrity Management Rider deferred account as of May 31, 2021, shall remain in that interest-bearing account until further disposition ordered by the Tennessee Public Utility Commission.

3. Consistent with the provisions of this Order, Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc.

² *Id.*

³ *Order Suspending IMR Surcharge Rate Tariff June 1, 2021 Through September 1, 2021* (April 29, 2021).

⁴ Tenn. Code Ann. § 65-5-103(a).

shall file a tariff with the Tennessee Public Utility Commission that reflects the suspension of the Integrity Management Rider surcharge rate.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monica Smith-Ashford". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Monica" being the most prominent part of the signature.

Monica Smith-Ashford, Hearing Officer