

# TENNESSEE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION




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Electronically Filed in TPUC Docket  
Room on December 4, 2023 at 3:03 p.m.

## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Docket File 23-00061

**FROM:** Grace Marek   
Utilities Division

**DATE:** December 4, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Audit of Piedmont Natural Gas Company's ("PNG") Incentive Plan Adjustment Account ("IPA") for the Period July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023.

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On November 17, 2023, Audit Staff filed its audit report in this case. Audit Staff respectfully submits the attached amended Page 4 of that report in order to correct the incentive savings retained by ratepayers for the period July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. In addition, Audit Staff respectfully submits the attached amended Attachment 1 of that report to reflect the Company's most recent Service Schedule No. 316.

These revisions do not change Staff's conclusion of the total IPA ending balance of \$1,766,942.93. Please replace the original Page 4 with the attached amended Page 4 and the original Attachment 1 with the attached amended Attachment 1.

C: David Foster  
Michelle Mairs  
Doug Templeton (via Email)

The following chart summarizes the results of the current period of the Incentive Plan, as presented in the Company's filing:

		<b>Plan Year Ended 6/30/23</b>
<b>Total Actual City Gate Purchases</b>	\$	<u>91,676,691</u>
<b>Total Annual Benchmark</b>	\$	<u>92,612,141</u>
<b>Percentage Actual Purchases to Benchmark</b>		98.99%
<b>Total Incentive Savings (Losses) from:</b>		
Gas Procurement	\$	935,450
Capacity Management & Off System Sales		<u>6,638,733</u>
<u>Total Incentive Savings</u>	\$	<u>7,574,183</u>
<b>Incentive Savings (Losses) Retained by Ratepayers (75%):</b>	\$	<u>5,974,183</u>
<b>Incentive Savings (Losses) Retained by Company (25%):<sup>9</sup></b>	\$	<u>1,600,000</u>

## **VI. INCENTIVE PLAN (IPA) FINDINGS**

Staff reviewed the gas purchasing activities and capacity management activities of Piedmont to determine whether the Company correctly calculated the amount of gains and losses accrued under its Incentive Plan and whether it complied fully with the terms of its tariff. Staff agrees with the IPA Account balances as calculated by the Company. Therefore, there are no findings. A summary of the account, as filed by the Company, is shown below.

### **SUMMARY OF THE IPA ACCOUNT:**

	<u>Company</u>
Under-recovered IPA Account Balance at 6/30/22	\$ 1,535,211.40
Plus Savings Accruing to Piedmont	1,600,000.00
Minus Amount Recovered from Customers (7/1/22-6/30/23)	<u>(1,471,198.20)</u>
Equals IPA Balance Before Interest	\$ 1,664,013.20
Plus Interest Calculated on Monthly Balances	<u>102,929.73</u>
<b>Equals IPA Account Balance at 6/30/23</b>	<b><u>\$ 1,766,942.93</u></b>

<sup>9</sup> Piedmont is subject to a cap on overall gains or losses of \$1.6 million annually.

# **AMENDED ATTACHMENT 1**

## **SERVICE SCHEDULE NO. 316**

### **Performance Incentive Plan**

#### **Applicability**

The Performance Incentive Plan (the Plan) replaces the annual reasonableness or prudence review of the Company's gas purchasing activities overseen by the Tennessee Public Utility Commission (Commission or TPUC). The Plan does not preclude the Commission from conducting an independent investigation into or examination of any aspect of the Plan or the Company's conduct thereunder. The Plan is designed to provide incentives to the Company in a manner that will produce rewards for its customers and its stockholders and improvements in the Company's gas procurement and capacity management activities. Each plan year (Plan Year) will begin July 1st. The annual provisions and filings herein would apply to this annual period. The Plan will continue until the Plan is either (a) terminated at the end of a Plan Year by not less than 90 days notice by the Company to the Commission or (b) the Plan is modified, amended or terminated by the Commission on a prospective basis.

#### **Overview of Structure**

The Plan establishes a predefined benchmark index to which the Company's commodity cost of gas is compared. It also addresses the recovery of gas supply reservation fees and the treatment of off-system sales and wholesale interstate sale for resale transactions. The net incentive benefits or costs will be shared between the Company's customers and the Company on a 75%-customers / 25%- stockholders basis for the Plan Year commencing on July 1, 2006.

The Plan also is designed to encourage the Company to actively market off-peak unutilized transportation and storage capacity on pipelines in the secondary market. It also addresses the sharing of asset management fees paid by asset managers, and other forms of compensation received by the Company for the release and/or utilization of the Company's transportation and storage assets by third-parties. The Company shall notify the TPUC Staff and the Consumer Advocate and Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General (CAD) of all "other forms of compensation" prior to inclusion of such compensation in the Plan. The net incentive benefits or costs of such activities will be shared between the Company's customers and the Company utilizing a 75%-customers / 25%-stockholders formula commencing on July 1, 2006.

Every three years the Company's activities under the Plan will be reviewed comprehensively by an independent consultant. The first triennial review shall occur in the autumn of 2008. The scope of the review may include all transactions and activities related to the Performance Incentive Plan, including, but not limited to, natural gas procurement, capacity management, storage, hedging, reserve margins, and off-system sales.

The Company is subject to a cap on overall incentive gains or losses of \$1.6 million annually. In connection with the Performance Incentive Plan, the Company shall file with the TPUC Staff,

and supply a copy to the CAD, and update each year, a Three Year Supply Plan. The Company will negotiate/obtain firm capacity, interruptible capacity and/or gas supply pursuant to such plan.

### **Commodity Costs**

Each month the Company will compare its *total city gate commodity and cost of gas*<sup>1</sup> to a benchmark dollar amount. The benchmark gas cost will be computed by multiplying total actual purchase quantities for the month by a price index. The monthly price index is defined as:

$$I = F_f(P_0K_0 + P_1K_1 + P_cK_c + \dots P_\alpha K_\alpha) + F_0O + F_dD; \text{ where} \\ F_f + F_0 + F_d = 1; \text{ and}$$

I = the monthly city gate commodity gas cost index.

$F_f$  = the fraction of gas supplies purchased in the first-of-the-month market which are transported to the city gate under the Company's FT, negotiated FT, and IT service agreements.

P = the Inside FERC Gas Market Report price index for the first-of-the-month edition for a geographic pricing region, where subscript 0 denotes Tennessee Gas Pipeline (TGP) Rate Zone 0; subscript 1 denotes TGP Rate Zone 1; subscript C denotes Columbia Gulf Transmission (CGT) - mainline, and subscript  $\alpha$  denotes new incremental firm services to which the Company may subscribe in the future.<sup>2</sup> The indices used for calculating Midwestern capacity shall be those produced by Natural Gas Intelligence for monthly purchases and Gas Daily for daily purchases. The commodity index prices will be adjusted to include the appropriate pipeline firm transportation (FT) and interruptible transportation (IT) commodity transportation charges and fuel retention to the city gate under the Company's FT, negotiated FT, and IT service agreements.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gas purchases associated with service provided under Texas Eastern Transmission Company Rate Schedule SCT shall be excluded from the incentive mechanism. The Company will continue to recover 100 percent of these costs through its PGA with no profit or loss potential. Extension or replacement of such contract shall be subject to the same competitive bidding procedures that will apply to other firm gas supply agreements. In addition, the Plan will measure storage gas supplies against the benchmark index during the months such quantities are purchased for injection. For purposes of comparing such gas purchase costs against the monthly city gate index price, the Company will exclude any commodity costs incurred downstream of the city gate to storage so that the Company's actual costs and the benchmark index are calculated on the same basis.

<sup>2</sup> To the extent that the Company renegotiates existing reservation fee supply contracts or executes new reservation fee supply contracts with commodity pricing provisions at a discount to the first-of-the-month price index, the Company shall modify the monthly commodity price index to reflect such discount.

<sup>3</sup> Capacity released for a month shall be excluded from the benchmark calculation for that month, excluding capacity released under an agreement where the Company maintains city gate delivery rights for the released capacity during such month.

$K$  = the fraction (relative to total maximum daily contract entitlement) of the Company's total firm, negotiated firm, and interruptible transportation capacity under contract in a geographic pricing region, where the subscripts are as above.<sup>4</sup>

$F_o$  = the fraction of gas supplies purchased in the first-of-the-month spot market which are delivered to the Company's system using transportation arrangements other than the Company's FT, negotiated FT, and IT contracts.

$O$  = the weighted average of Inside FERC Gas Market Report first-of-the-month price indices, plus applicable IT rates and fuel retention, from the source of the gas to the city gate, where the weights are computed based on actual purchases of gas supplies purchased by the Company and delivered to the Company's system using transportation arrangements other than the Company's FT, negotiated FT, and IT contracts.

$F_d$  = the fraction of gas supplies purchased in the daily spot market.

$D$  = the weighted average of daily average index commodity prices taken from Gas Daily for the appropriate geographic pricing regions, where the weights are computed based on actual purchases made during the month. The commodity index prices will be adjusted to include the appropriate transportation commodity charges and fuel retention to the city gate.

### **Gas Supply Reservation Fees**

The Company will continue to recover 100% of gas supply reservation fee costs through its PGA with no profit or loss potential. For new contracts and/or contracts subject to renegotiation during the Plan Year, the Company will solicit bids for gas supply contracts containing a reservation fee.

### **Off-System Sales And Sale For Resale Transactions**

Margin on off-system sales and wholesale sale-for-resale transactions using the Company's firm, negotiated firm, and interruptible transportation and capacity entitlements (the costs of which are recovered from the Company's ratepayers) shall be credited to the Plan and will be shared with ratepayers. Margin on such sales will be defined as the difference between the sales proceeds and the total variable costs incurred by the Company in connection with the transaction, including transportation and gas costs, taxes, fuel, or other costs. For purposes of gas costs, the Company will impute such costs for its related

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<sup>4</sup> Because the aggregate maximum daily contract quantities in the Company's FT contract portfolio vary by month over the course of the year, the weights will be recalculated each month to reflect actual contract demand quantities for such month. The contract weights, and potentially the price indices used, will also vary as the Company renegotiates existing or adds new FT contracts. As new contracts are negotiated, the Company shall modify the index to reflect actual contract demand quantities and the commodity price indices appropriate for the supply regions reached by such FT agreements. Citygate benchmark calculations shall be computed utilizing the Company's Design Day delivery requirements (deliveries required on a peak day).

supply purchases at the benchmark first-of-the-month or daily index, as appropriate, on the pipeline and in the zone in which the sale takes place. The difference between the Company's actual costs and such index price is taken into account under the Plan. After deducting the total transaction costs from the sales proceeds, any remaining margin will be credited to commodity gas costs and shared with customers on a 75%- customer / 25%-stockholders basis.

### **Capacity Management**

To the extent the Company is able to release transportation or storage capacity, or generate transportation or storage margin associated with off-system or wholesale sales-for-resale, the associated cost savings and/or asset management fees, or other forms of compensation associated with such activities, shall be shared by the Company and customers according to the following sharing formula: 75%-customers / 25%-stockholders. The Company shall notify the TPUC Staff and the Consumer Advocate and Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General (CAD) of all "other forms of compensation" prior to inclusion of such compensation in the Plan.

### **Hedging Activities**

The Company may engage in hedging transactions<sup>5</sup> within the PGA/ACA mechanism. Costs related to hedging transactions may be recovered through the ACA account; provided, however, that such costs recovered through the ACA account shall not exceed one percent (1%) of total annual gas costs.<sup>6</sup> Costs related to hedging transactions recoverable through the ACA account shall be defined as all direct, transaction related costs arising from the Company's prudent efforts to stabilize or hedge its commodity gas costs including, without limitation, brokerage fees, and the costs of financial instruments.

All costs related to hedging transactions, in addition to all gains and losses from hedging transactions, shall be credited/debited to the ACA account in the respective month that each hedging transaction closes. Costs related to hedging transactions that are incurred prior to the month that the hedging transaction closes shall be temporarily recorded in a separate, non-interest-bearing account for tracking purposes.

### **Determination of Shared Saving**

Each month during the term of the Plan, the Company will compute any gains or losses in accordance with the Plan. If the Company earns a gain, a separate Incentive Plan Account (IPA) will be debited with such gain. If the Company incurs a loss, that same IPA will be credited with such loss. During a Plan Year, the Company will be limited to overall gains or losses totaling \$1.6 million. Interest shall be computed on balances in the IPA using the same interest rate and methods as used in the Company's Actual Cost Adjustment (ACA) account. The offsetting

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<sup>5</sup> Hedging transactions, as used herein, shall include but not be limited to futures contracts, financial derivative products, storage swap arrangements, or other private agreements to hedge, manage or reduce gas costs.

<sup>6</sup> One percent (1%) of total annual gas costs, for the purposes of establishing a recovery cap, shall be computed from the most current audited and approved gas costs for the Company in a TPUC docket as of the first day of the month, 12 months prior to the first day of the period under audit.

entries to IPA gains or losses will be recorded to income or expense, as appropriate. At its option, however, the Company may temporarily record any monthly gains in a non-regulatory deferred credit balance sheet account until results for the entire Plan Year are available.

Gains or losses accruing to the Company under the Plan will form the basis for a rate increment or decrement to be filed and placed into effect separate from any other rate adjustments to recover or refund such amount over a prospective twelve-month period. The Company is subject to a cap on overall incentive gains or losses of \$1.6 million annually.

Each year, effective November 1, the rates for all customers, excluding transportation customers who receive no direct benefit from any gas cost reductions resulting from the Plan, will be increased or decreased by a separate rate increment or decrement designed to amortize the collection or refund of the June 30 IPA balance over the succeeding twelve-month period. The increment or decrement will be established by dividing the June 30 IPA balance by the appropriate volumetric billing determinants for the twelve months ended June 30. During the twelve-month amortization period, the amount collected or refunded each month will be computed by multiplying the billed volumetric determinants for such month by the increment or decrement, as applicable. The product will be credited or debited to the IPA, as appropriate. The balance in the IPA will be tracked as a separate collection mechanism. Subject to approval by the TPUC, the Company may also propose to refund positive IPA balances on an intra-year basis by making direct bill credits to all customers (except transportation customers) where such direct bill credit would be beneficial to customers.

#### **Filing with the Commission**

The Company will file calculations of shared savings and shared costs quarterly with the Commission not later than 60 days after the end of each interim fiscal quarter and will file an annual report not later than 60 days following the end of each Plan Year. Unless the Commission provides written notification to the Company within 180 days of the annual reports, the Incentive Plan Account shall be deemed in compliance with the provisions of this Service Schedule. The TPUC Staff may expand the time for consideration of the annual reports by up to an additional sixty (60) days upon written notification to the Company or longer by mutual agreement or upon a showing of good cause.

#### **Periodic Index Revisions**

Because of changes in the natural gas marketplace, the price indices utilized by the Company, and the composition of the Company's purchased gas portfolio may change. The Company shall, within sixty (60) days of identifying a change to a significant component of the mechanism, provide notice of such change to the Commission. Unless the Commission provides written justification to the Company within sixty (60) days of such notice, the price indices shall be deemed approved as proposed by the Company.



### **Triennial Review**

A comprehensive review of the transactions and activities related to the Performance Incentive Plan shall be conducted by an independent consultant once every three years. The initial triennial review shall be conducted in the autumn of 2008 and subsequent triennial reviews shall be conducted every third year thereafter. The TPUC Staff, the CAD, and the Company shall make an effort to maintain a list of no less than five (5) mutually agreeable independent consultants or consulting firms qualified to conduct the aforementioned review. Any dispute concerning whether an independent consultant shall be added to the list shall be resolved by the TPUC Staff, after consultation with the Company and the CAD. For each review, the TPUC Staff shall select three (3) prospective independent consultants from that list. Each such consultant shall possess the expertise necessary to conduct the review. The TPUC Staff shall provide the list of prospective independent consultants to the Company and the CAD via e-mail. The Company and the CAD shall have the right, but not the obligation, to strike one (1) of the prospective independent consultants from the list by identifying the stricken consultant in writing to the TPUC Staff within thirty (30) days from the date the list is e-mailed. The TPUC Staff shall select the independent consultant from those remaining on the list after the Company's and the CAD's rights to strike have expired. The cost of the review shall be reasonable in relation to its scope. Any and all relationships between the independent consultant and the Company, the TPUC Staff, and/or the CAD shall be disclosed, and the independent consultant shall have had no prior relationship with either the Company, the TPUC Staff, or the CAD for at least the preceding five (5) years unless the Company, the TPUC Staff and the CAD agree in writing to waive this requirement. The TPUC Staff, the CAD and the Company may consult amongst themselves during the selection process; provided, however, that all such communications between the parties shall be disclosed to any party not involved in such communication so that each party may participate fully in the selection process.

The scope of the triennial reviews may include all transactions and activities related either directly or indirectly to the Performance Incentive Plan as conducted by the Company or its affiliates, including, but not limited to, the following areas of transactions and activities: (a) natural gas procurement; (b) capacity management; (c) storage; (d) hedging; (e) reserve margins; and (f) off-system sales. The scope of each triennial review shall include a review of each of the foregoing matters as well as such additional matters as may be reasonably identified by the Company, the TPUC Staff, or the CAD relative to the operation or results of the Performance Incentive Plan.

The Company, the TPUC Staff, or the CAD may present documents and information to the independent consultant for the independent consultant's review and consideration. Copies of all such documents and information shall be presented simultaneously to the independent consultant and all other parties.

The independent consultant shall make findings of fact, as well as identify and describe areas of concern and improvement, if any, that in the consultant's opinion warrant further consideration; however, the independent consultant shall not propose changes to the structure of the

Performance Incentive Plan itself. The independent consultant shall complete and issue a written report of its findings and conclusions by July 1 of the year immediately following the triennial review. The report deadline may be waived by the written consent of the TPUC Staff, the Company, and the CAD.

The independent consultant shall not propose changes to the structure of the Performance Incentive Plan itself; however, the TPUC Staff, the Company, or the CAD may use the report of the independent consultant as grounds for making recommendations or proposed changes to the Commission, and the TPUC Staff, the Company, or the CAD may support or oppose such recommendations or proposed changes. Any proposed changes to the structure of the Performance Incentive Plan resulting from the initial triennial review or subsequent triennial reviews, whether adopted by agreement or pursuant to a ruling of the Commission, shall be implemented on a prospective basis only beginning with the incentive Plan Year immediately following such agreement or ruling.

The cost of the triennial reviews shall be paid initially by the Company and recovered through the ACA account. The TPUC Staff may continue its annual audits of the IPA and the ACA account, and the triennial reviews shall not in any way limit the scope of such annual audits. The CAD retains all of its statutory rights, and the triennial reviews shall not in any way affect such rights.