

BEFORE THE TENNESSEE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

August 4, 2026

IN RE:

**JOINT APPLICATION OF LIMESTONE WATER
UTILITY OPERATING COMPANY, LLC AND THE
CITY OF GRAND JUNCTION, FOR APPROVAL OF
THE ACQUISITION OF AND TO OPERATE THE
SAULSBURY DISTRIBUTION WATER SYSTEM,
AND TO TRANSFER OR ISSUE A CERTIFICATE OF
PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY**

**DOCKET NO.
26-00036**

**ORDER REQUIRING PUBLIC NOTICE OF THE PROPOSED ACQUISITION IN
ACCORDANCE WITH COMMISSION RULE 1220-04-14-.08**

This matter is before the Administrative Judge of the Tennessee Public Utility Commission (“Commission” or “TPUC”) on the *Joint Application of Limestone Water Utility Operating Company, LLC, and the City of Grand Junction, for Approval of the Acquisition of and to Operate the Saulsbury Distribution Water System, and to Transfer or Issue a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity* (“*Joint Application*”) filed by Limestone Water Utility Operating Company, LLC (“Limestone”) and the City of Grand Junction (“Grand Junction”) (collectively “Joint Applicants”). This matter is before the Administrative Judge, *sua sponte*, to consider whether the customers of the Saulsbury Distribution Water System (the “Saulsbury System”) have adequate notice concerning the proposed acquisition of the system by Limestone.

RELEVANT BACKGROUND

On April 23, 2026, Limestone and Grand Junction filed the *Joint Application*. The Joint Applicants seek approval of their Agreement for Sale of Utility System concerning the Saulsbury Distribution Water System (“System”) to Central States Water Resources, Inc. (“Central States”), the parent company of Limestone, and for Limestone to be issued a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (“CCN”) to

own and operate the Saulsbury System.¹ The *Joint Application* includes a Draft Customer Notification Letter that will provide notice that Limestone seeks authorization to acquire and operate the Saulsbury System.² The Joint Applicants propose to send the Draft Customer Notification Letter to the customers of the Saulsbury System after the Commission notices a hearing date on the *Joint Application*.³

COMMISSION RULE PUBLIC NOTICE REQUIREMENTS

Commission Rule 1220-04-14-.08, in relevant part, states:

- (5) The acquiring utility shall provide public notice of the proposed acquisition in accordance with applicable statutory law and Commission rules and regulations, as well as any additional public notice requirements ordered by the Commission or the Hearing Officer.

FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The Commission is committed to ensuring transparent proceedings that provide the public and customers of Commission-regulated public utilities with adequate notice of proceedings that may affect their service or utility rates. All Commission proceedings are conducted in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, Tenn. Code Ann. § 4-5-301, *et seq.* (“UAPA”), and the Tennessee Open Meetings Act, Tenn. Code Ann. § 8-44-101, *et seq.* Consistent with this commitment to transparency, Commission Rule 1220-04-14-.08 requires the acquiring utility to provide public notice of any proposed acquisition.

The Commission requires comparable public notice for petitions involving a change to utility rates. In rate proceedings, the utility must notify its customers that it is seeking a revision of its rates both immediately upon initiation of the proceeding and again once the date and location of the hearing have been published.⁴ These notices must be sent directly to the customers in the same manner as they receive billing statements, and on the utility’s website.⁵

¹ *Joint Application* (April 23, 2026).

² *Id.* at 15, App. A-13 and Ex. 26. The Administrative Judge notes that the draft letter states that the Joint Applicants are, “seeking Commission authorization for Saulsbury to sell to Limestone Water its sewer system assets...,” while the *Joint Application* concerns the Saulsbury Water Distribution System.

³ *Id.* at App. A-13.

⁴ Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. 1220-01-02-.23(4).

⁵ *Id.*

The current proceeding involves a proposed change in the utility service provider for the 166 customers of the Saulsbury System. At this time, these customers have received no formal notice of the *Joint Application* or of the potential change of ownership of the Saulsbury System. Although the Commission's Utility Acquisition Rules do not specify the precise timing or form of notice required, notice is nonetheless required in every acquisition in accordance with applicable statutes, rules, and any directives issued by the Commission or Administrative Judge. Because approval of a utility acquisition requires the Commission to establish the rates that the acquiring utility operator may charge the affected customers, the Commission's Rules governing rate petitions provide helpful guidance regarding the timing and type of public notice that best ensures customers are adequately informed in an acquisition proceeding.

To promote transparency in this proceeding, the Administrative Judge directs Limestone to issue a notice, within 30 days of this order, directly to all current customers of the Saulsbury System. The notice must be delivered in the same manner as customers receive their billing statements, whether electronically or by first-class mail, and must state that Limestone has filed a petition seeking approval of its acquisition of the Saulsbury System. The notice shall also provide instructions on where docket filings related to the matter may be accessed. In addition, both Limestone and Grand Junction must post this notice on their respective websites. Once the date and location of the hearing on the Joint Application have been set, Limestone shall issue a second notice to the Saulsbury System customers in the same manner as described above and the Joint Applicant shall post the notice on their respective websites.

IT IS SO ORDERED.



Aaron J. Conklin
Administrative Judge
By Commission Delegated Authority