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**Before the  
Tennessee Public Utility Commission**

**Docket No. 26-00042**

**2026 Annual ARM Filing**

**Direct Testimony  
of  
Joe Hampton**

**On Behalf Of  
Spire Tennessee Inc.**



May 20, 2026

1 **Q. Please state your name and business address.**

2 A. My name is Joe Hampton. My business address is 605 Richard Arrington  
3 Blvd. N, Birmingham, Alabama, 35203.

4 **Q. By whom and in what capacity are you employed?**

5 A. I am employed as President, Spire Tennessee Inc. (“Spire Tennessee”).

6 **Q. Please describe your educational and professional background.**

7 A. I began my career at Alabama Gas Company (“Alagasco”), which was later  
8 acquired by Spire Inc. (“Spire”), in 1995 as an engineering intern while  
9 completing my bachelor’s degrees in physics and electrical engineering at  
10 the University of Alabama. I obtained my Master of Business  
11 Administration and Management in 2003 from Troy University. Over the  
12 past 30 years with Spire and its predecessor company, I have held numerous  
13 leadership positions in field operations, including all aspects of service,  
14 construction and distribution operations, economic development, sales and  
15 community development. In 2015, I was named Vice President, Field  
16 Operations for Spire Missouri Inc. (“Spire Missouri”), and I assumed my  
17 current position as President, Spire Alabama Inc. (“Spire Alabama”), Spire  
18 Gulf Inc. (“Spire Gulf”) and Spire Mississippi Inc. (“Spire Mississippi”) in  
19 December 2018. In addition to those duties, I was named President, Spire  
20 Tennessee in December 2025.

1 **Q. Have you previously testified before the Tennessee Public Utility**  
2 **Commission (“TPUC” or the “Commission”) or any other regulatory**  
3 **authority?**

4 A. Yes. I filed direct testimony in TPUC Docket No. 25-00074, the docket in  
5 which the Commission approved the sale and transfer of Piedmont Natural  
6 Gas Company, Inc.’s (“Piedmont”) authority to provide utility services  
7 pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated § 65-4-113, and related  
8 authorizations, along with the transfer of the certificate of public  
9 convenience and necessity related to the service territory, to Spire  
10 Tennessee (“Transfer Approval”).

11 **Q. What is the purpose of your testimony in this proceeding?**

12 A. The purpose of my testimony is to reiterate Spire Tennessee’s commitment  
13 to capably and responsibly operate its Tennessee local distribution company  
14 assets, and to provide an update on how the transition to Spire Tennessee  
15 has been for Piedmont’s former Tennessee employees.

16 **Q. Do you have any exhibits to your testimony?**

17 A. No, I do not.

18 **I. Spire Tennessee’s Service to its Customers**

19 **Q. Please describe Spire Tennessee and its business.**

20 A. Spire Tennessee is a wholly owned subsidiary of Spire, a publicly traded  
21 natural gas utility holding company headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri.  
22 Spire is principally engaged in the purchase, retail distribution, and sale of

1 natural gas through its regulated gas utilities, including Spire Missouri,  
2 Spire Alabama, Spire Gulf, Spire Mississippi, and now, Spire Tennessee.

3 **Q. Please describe Spire Tennessee’s gas distribution operations during**  
4 **the historic base period (“HBP”).**

5 A. During the HBP of calendar year 2025, the Tennessee natural gas  
6 distribution operations were owned and operated by Piedmont, a wholly  
7 owned subsidiary of Duke Energy Corporation. As of December 31, 2025,  
8 the system served approximately 207,000 customers in Tennessee. Capital  
9 investments made prior to and during the HBP facilitated the ability to  
10 safely and reliably serve Tennessee customers under all weather conditions.

11 **Q. Please describe Spire Tennessee’s service territory and customer base.**

12 A. Spire Tennessee’s system serves customers in several cities, towns, and  
13 communities in the greater Nashville metropolitan area of Davidson County  
14 and portions of the adjoining counties of Cheatham, Dickson, Robertson,  
15 Rutherford, Sumner, Trousdale, Williamson, and Wilson. The majority  
16 (approximately 90%) of Spire Tennessee’s customers are residential  
17 customers who use gas directly in their homes, largely for space heating and  
18 water heating needs. Spire Tennessee also provides service to non-  
19 residential customers, who are mostly commercial, industrial, and  
20 manufacturing businesses.

1 **Q. What are Spire Tennessee’s most important business goals?**

2 A. Spire Tennessee is excited about becoming a trusted utility provider in  
3 Tennessee. Across all of its regulated gas utilities, Spire continuously  
4 strives to provide safe and reliable natural gas service to its customers at  
5 reasonable rates coupled with excellent customer service. Therefore,  
6 paramount to the Company are affordability; customer, public, and  
7 employee safety; and ensuring that Spire Tennessee is ready and able to  
8 serve its customers on even the coldest of winter days, when demand is at  
9 its peak and our service is vital to our customers’ and communities’ needs.  
10 The Company also wants its customers to experience great customer service  
11 with each and every interaction, all while exemplifying excellent  
12 environmental stewardship.

13 **Q. Does Spire receive feedback on its customer service?**

14 A. Yes. Spire has continued to receive positive customer satisfaction scores  
15 because of our continuing focus on placing the customer at the center of all  
16 we do. In 2024, Spire was ranked just behind Piedmont as No. 2<sup>1</sup> in  
17 customer satisfaction with residential natural gas service in the South  
18 among large utilities, according to the J.D. Power 2024 U.S. Gas Utility

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.jdpower.com/business/press-releases/2024-gas-utility-residential-customer-satisfaction-study>, December 24, 2024.

1 Residential Customer Satisfaction Study.<sup>2</sup> For 2025, Spire ranked No. 3<sup>3</sup> in  
2 customer satisfaction – again, just behind Piedmont – in the aforementioned  
3 study in the same category.<sup>4</sup>

4 **Q. What type of presence does Spire Tennessee intend to maintain in its**  
5 **service territory?**

6 A. Spire has a history of supporting the community and advancing economic  
7 development within the states it operates and will maintain a strong  
8 presence with local field personnel and leadership based right here in  
9 Tennessee. In that same vein, Spire Tennessee is committed to supporting  
10 local economic development, workforce initiatives, and community  
11 programs and providing safe, reliable service at reasonable rates for the long  
12 term.

13 **Q. Can you point to any concrete examples of Spire Tennessee’s**  
14 **commitment to support its Tennessee-based communities?**

15 A. Yes. Although we’re just getting started, just over a month after the  
16 Tennessee community welcomed Spire Tennessee, we hosted our first Day

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<sup>2</sup> The 2024 J.D. Power Gas Utility Residential Customer Satisfaction Study (“Study”) examined satisfaction across the following six factors: billing and payment, price, corporate citizenship, communications, customer care, safety and reliability. The Study results are based on responses from 63,363 online interviews conducted from January 2024 through October 2024 among residential customers of the 86 largest gas utility brands representing nearly 125,000 residential customers across the United States.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.jdpower.com/business/press-releases/2025-us-gas-utility-residential-customer-satisfaction-study>.

<sup>4</sup> The 2025 U.S. Gas Utility Residential Customer Satisfaction Study is based on responses from 72,765 online interviews conducted from January to November 2025 among residential customers of the 87 largest gas utility brands across the United States, which represent more than 125,000 residential customers.

1 for Good<sup>5</sup> project on May 8, 2026. More than 35 volunteers helped students  
2 at Nashville's Dan Mills Elementary School celebrate their annual field day.  
3 Orange Spire Serves shirts made their Nashville debut as members of Spire  
4 Tennessee cooked 800 hot dogs and staffed activities for students, their  
5 families and faculty.

6 **II. ARM Testimony and Witness Lineup**

7 **Q. What witnesses will offer testimony on behalf of Spire Tennessee in this**  
8 **proceeding?**

9 A. In addition to me, the following witnesses offer direct testimony on behalf  
10 of Spire Tennessee in this proceeding:

- 11 • David Yonce, Vice President, Regulatory, Spire Missouri (filing on  
12 behalf of Spire Tennessee), will provide an overview of Spire, an  
13 update on the transition from Piedmont as well as employee  
14 integration, and the status of the Company's liquefied natural gas  
15 project (started back in 2021 by Piedmont) and overall future cost  
16 recovery considerations;
- 17 • Eric Bouselli, Manager, Regulatory Strategy & Forecasting, Spire  
18 Missouri (filing on behalf of Spire Tennessee), will summarize  
19 Piedmont's earned return on equity ("ROE") for the HBP and the  
20 resulting revenue deficiencies computed in Spire Tennessee's 2026  
21 Annual ARM Filing, explain the calculation of the revenue

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<sup>5</sup> Spire offers eight hours of company-paid volunteer time to every employee annually.

1 requirement adjustments pursuant to Spire Tennessee’s Annual  
2 Review Mechanism Tariff Filing (“2026 Annual ARM Filing”),  
3 present the overall revenue percentage increase associated with the  
4 computed revenue deficiencies and proposed adjustment to rates  
5 effective October 1, 2026, in this proceeding, and confirm that the  
6 proposed increase complies with the 4% annual base rate increase  
7 limit imposed by the Transfer Approval; and

- 8 • Jay Neal, Senior Analyst, Regulatory Affairs, Spire Tennessee, will  
9 testify about the various ratemaking adjustments to Piedmont’s  
10 actual 2025 per book amounts to support the appropriate  
11 representation of Rate Base and Net Operating Income for Return  
12 under the ARM.
- 13 • John D. Taylor of Atrium Economics, LLC, will testify, on behalf  
14 of Spire Tennessee, on the Company’s allocated cost-of-service  
15 study and the proposed apportionment of the revenue increase  
16 among its customer classes.

17 **III. Current Status of Workforce Transition**

18 **Q. Given your responsibility for multiple utilities, have you had a presence**  
19 **in Nashville since the Transfer Approval hearing?**

20 A. Yes. I have been in Nashville in March, April, and again in May for work,  
21 and actually just left Nashville yesterday prior to the submission of our  
22 ARM filing and accompanying testimony. As I testified in the Transfer  
23 Approval proceeding, it only takes three hours door-to-door from my office

1 in Birmingham to my office here in Nashville, so please rest assured that I  
2 will have a consistent presence in the heart of the Company's operations. I  
3 will reiterate, however, that the talent that runs the day-to-day operations of  
4 the Company are the men and women that work right here in Nashville,  
5 Tennessee. I will be present to encourage, motivate, and support them as  
6 needed and am humbled to lead such a dedicated, competent, and  
7 experienced group of teammates.

8 **Q. From your vantage point, how has the workforce transition gone so**  
9 **far?**

10 A. I believe it has gone well. While it's certainly challenging to transition an  
11 entire workforce over to a new company in a very compressed amount of  
12 time, the employees have shared very positive feedback regarding how  
13 Spire has handled the entire process. One employee specifically shared that  
14 every time there has been a decision point impacting transitioning  
15 employees, Spire has consistently made the decision that would benefit the  
16 employees.

17 **Q. Is there anything else that you would like this Commission to know?**

18 A. Yes. I enjoyed meeting the Commission, Commission Staff, the Consumer  
19 Advocate Division of the Office of the Tennessee Attorney General, and  
20 others during the Transfer Approval process and hearing. We are excited  
21 to be here in Tennessee.

22 Now, however, it is time to put our tremendous amount of  
23 experience operating utilities throughout the Midwest and Southeastern

1 United States to work in Tennessee. Since April 1, 2026, our focus has been  
2 on providing safe, exceptional service to our Tennessee customers. That  
3 unwavering focus will remain the same for many years to come.

4 **Q. Does this conclude your pre-filed direct testimony?**

5 **A. Yes.**