

Decision No. 7241

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

The City of Bakersfield,
A Municipal Corporation,

Complainant,

vs.

San Joaquin Light & Power Corporation,
a corporation, and Midway Gas Company,
a corporation,

Defendants.

ORIGINAL

Case No. 1405

Wealey P. Grijalva, City Attorney Bakersfield.

Murray Bourne, for San Joaquin Light & Power
Corporation.

Jared How, for Midway Gas Company.

Loveland, Commissioner.

O P I N I O N

This is a complaint filed by the City of Bakersfield against the San Joaquin Light and Power Corporation and the Midway Gas Company, alleging that the said corporations have not and do not maintain proper pressure gas in the mains and pipes supplying consumers in the Town of Bakersfield; that the meters installed and used by San Joaquin Light & Power Corporation for measuring gas to its consumers are not accurate and that said corporation makes no effort to keep them accurate; that said San Joaquin Light & Power Corporation has without reason refused to make gas service connections to bona fide applicants; that the rates charged by said Midway Gas Company and said San Joaquin Light & Power Corporation for furnishing

and supplying gas as aforesaid are unjust, unreasonable and excessive. A public hearing was held in Bakersfield on June 11, 1920, and the matter thereupon submitted with exception of that portion of the complaint which involved the matter of rates charged for gas.

Domestic and commercial consumers in the City of Bakersfield are supplied with gas by San Joaquin Light and Power Corporation through a combination of high and low pressure distributing systems operated with district regulators. Gas is delivered to the distributing company in wholesale by the Midway Gas Company, which operates two high pressure transmission lines, bringing natural gas from the Elk Hills field near Taft about forty miles distant.

Mayor Jay A. Hinman of the City of Bakersfield testified to inadequacy and excessive variations of gas pressure which have existed, especially in the Eastern parts of the city, and introduced charts from recording pressure gauges showing extreme variations of from three to thirteen inches of pressure. He further testified that during the winter seasons when heavy demands were made upon the gas system the pressure frequently became insufficient for the proper operation of gas appliances and that the wide variations which were experienced, caused consumers considerable annoyance and loss of efficiency in their use of gas.

Investigations have been made at frequent intervals by engineers of this Commission in order to determine gas service conditions existing in Bakersfield. It has been found that during past winters inadequate gas pressures have existed in certain portions of the eastern parts of the City. This has resulted from two causes: First, insufficient pressure

in the main supply lines of the Midway Gas Company; secondly, inadequate size of mains in the city distribution system.

The first of these conditions has been satisfactorily corrected by the laying of a new 10-inch natural gas transmission line from the Elk Hills by the Midway Gas Company. This provides for the possible delivery of a maximum of 24,000,000 cubic feet of gas per day to Bakersfield at 70 pounds pressure. The second condition of inadequate distribution mains has been remedied by the installation of some additional mains which have recently been laid. San Joaquin Light and Power Corporation filed with the Commission at the time of the hearing a statement of approved construction expenditures providing for the immediate laying of 8785 feet of 4-inch mains and 363 feet of 2-inch mains, so arranged as to reinforce pressures in existing mains and tie in dead ends and provide a circulating system for the gas. This work has been completed and appears to be sufficient to prevent the recurrence of future trouble from this source.

Investigation of the records of San Joaquin Light and Power Corporation shows that routine testing of meters is being carried on at a much faster rate than is required by General Order No. 58 of this Commission. It is found that of all meters tested approximately three-fourths of them are under-registering rather than over-registering. High bill complaints have occurred frequently but testimony in this case indicates this to be the result of errors in the reading of meters, for which adjustment is readily made.

Evidence relative to alleged delays on the part of the defendant in making gas main extensions, shows that all construction orders for such work must be approved at the head

office of the corporation in Fresno before work can be authorized or started. This procedure, which frequently required from one to three weeks, coupled with the previous shortages of pipe and supply existing throughout the State, has at times made it impossible for San Joaquin Light & Power Corporation to make prompt installation of gas mains.

The City of Bakersfield enjoys one of the cheapest gas rates existing in this State, together with the privilege of receiving natural gas of a high quality. Comparison with other communities using natural gas shows the cost to be the lowest in California. This case was submitted in regard to all points except that of alleged excessive rates charged for gas.

Since the submission of this matter, the City of Bakersfield has communicated to the Railroad Commission its desire that the matter of rates and charges for gas service by San Joaquin Light and Power Corporation be dropped.

I therefore recommend the following form of Order:

O R D E R

The City of Bakersfield, a municipal corporation, having come before the Railroad Commission alleging unsatisfactory conditions of gas service as supplied by San Joaquin Light and Power Corporation and Midway Gas Company, in the City of Bakersfield, a hearing having been held at which all parties were heard and the matter submitted and being now ready for decision, the Railroad Commission of the State of California hereby finds as a fact that, while certain unsatisfactory gas pressure conditions have previously existed in the City of Bakersfield, these conditions have been remedied and removed

by proper and adequate enlargement of facilities and equipment of defendants San Joaquin Light & Power Corporation and Midway Gas Company.

It is hereby ordered that this case of the City of Bakersfield vs. San Joaquin Light & Power Corporation and Midway Gas Company be dismissed without prejudice.

The foregoing Opinion and Order are hereby approved and ordered filed as the Opinion and Order of the Railroad Commission of the State of California.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 16th day of July, 1921.

H. W. Bondick

H. D. Lovelace

Dwight Martin

Commissioners