

Decision No. 35406

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the matter of the application of PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY, a corporation, for an order authorizing applicant to file and make effective electric and gas rules and regulations to be designated Emergency Rules and Regulations A-2 and A-3, respectively, in words and figures as written in the form therefor shown in Exhibits "A" and "B" hereof.

Application No. 25185

ORIGINAL

BY THE COMMISSION:

FIRST SUPPLEMENTAL OPINION AND ORDER

In this First Supplemental Application Pacific Gas and Electric Company, hereinafter sometimes referred to as Applicant, seeks an order authorizing it to file and make effective new and revised Emergency Rules and Regulations relating to bi-monthly meter readings and billings for gas, electric and water services and to withdraw and cancel the presently effective gas and electric Emergency Rules and Regulations on the same services. Copies of said proposed Emergency Rules and Regulations are made a part of the Supplemental Application as Exhibits Nos. 1, 2 and 3.

In this Supplemental Application Applicant refers to and incorporates by reference the original application of the same number filed with the Commission on August 7, 1942. In addition, Applicant recites the facts that in accordance with the authority granted by the Commission in Decision No. 35681, dated August 11, 1942, in the aforesaid application, Applicant filed Emergency Rules and Regulations A-2 for electric service and A-3 for gas service and, in accordance therewith, inaugurated a plan whereby gas and electric meters as well as customer billings would be read and issued every two months rather than every month as formerly required. Applicant further represents that as the result of such bi-monthly meter readings and billings a very material saving has been made in the use of automotive equipment as well as in man power. As an indication as to the extent of accounts in the rural

areas that are on the new billing basis, Applicant states that as of December 31, 1942, approximately 23.2% of the total electric accounts, and in number 228,600, and some 5.5% of the total gas accounts, and in number 40,200, were being handled on a bi-monthly basis.

Applicant now represents that due to the difficulty of securing and maintaining adequate personnel, as well as the desirability of conserving the use of additional critical materials, it is practically imperative that it be permitted, as necessity arises, to gradually go over to bi-monthly meter reading and billing in the suburban areas as well as in certain of its urban areas. In addition, Applicant proposes to include its water service, as well as its gas and electric in the program. At the present time Applicant represents that it is impossible to state the exact extent and degree to which it may be necessary to include incorporated areas in this conservation program. On a system as large as Applicant's there are many conditions obtaining and, where the turnover in population is comparatively low and generally in urban areas not materially affected by war workers, a longer period of meter reading and billing may prove practical. However, in certain congested sections where there is a considerable movement in population, longer term billing would, in the opinion of Applicant, result in excessive uncollectibles. Because of these circumstances, Applicant requests that it be granted the permissive right to enlarge its bi-monthly meter reading and billing area without the limitation of uniformly applying such changes and without the necessity of refiling its Emergency Rules and Regulations every time more territory is to be included.

The Commission is quite cognizant of the growing shortage in available man power and with the various steps and measures being taken by the Federal Government in its effort to meet this situation in order to better prosecute the war to a speedy and successful end. The Commission, too, realizes the many differences and the changing conditions in Applicant's service areas and the practical difficulties in foreseeing what managerial steps and requirements may be needed to be made effective in order to continue to render the quality of uninterrupted service during these troubled times. Under the circumstances,

the Commission's permissive authority to enlarge the scope of bi-monthly meter reading and billing is believed warranted. However, in making this grant in the order that follows, the Commission believes that it should be kept reasonably well informed and up to date on the utility practice that is actually effective at any time. The Commission may be so kept informed by written advice from the Applicant whenever there is any general change in Applicant's practice as to the part or portion of the territory included under the new billing and metering procedure.

A public hearing being deemed unnecessary and good cause appearing;

It Is Hereby Found As A Fact that it is in the public interest to grant permissive authority to enable the Pacific Gas and Electric Company to change its gas, electric and water meter reading and billing practices throughout the territory now served and that which it may serve, and any incidental increases in billing which may result therefrom are hereby found reasonable and justified, therefore,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Pacific Gas and Electric Company may file Emergency Rule and Regulation A-2 for electric service, A-3 for gas service and A-2 for water service and all in accordance with Exhibits Nos. 1, 2 and 3, respectively, of the Supplemental Application.

The effective date of this Order shall be the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 1st day of June, 1943.

Francis D. Havenue
A. P. Kelly
Justin J. O'Connell
Richard L. ...
Thomas C. ...
Commissioners.