

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 57512

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of)
SAN DIEGO GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY, a)
corporation, for a general increase)
in steam rates under Section 454 of)
the Public Utilities Code.)
(Steam))

Application No. 39679

(Appearances and witnesses
are listed in Appendix B)

O P I N I O N

Applicant's Request

San Diego Gas & Electric Company, engaged to a limited extent in the manufacture, distribution and sale of low pressure steam in a limited portion of the business district of San Diego,¹ filed the above-entitled application on December 27, 1957 requesting an increase in annual revenues from steam sales of \$55,300, or 48.1 per cent, based on the estimated 1958 revenues of \$114,900 at present rates. On May 12, 1958, by Exhibit No. S-3, applicant filed a revision to its proposed new steam rates and estimates that the revised rates will increase steam revenues by \$58,100, or 50.5 per cent, on the estimated 1958 revenues of \$114,800 (\$100 less revenue because of termination of use of open-end appliances) at present rates, if effective for a full year.

¹ Applicant's primary business is furnishing electric utility service in San Diego County and a portion of Orange County, and gas utility service in the City of San Diego and other communities in western San Diego County. During the year ended December 31, 1956, applicant's gross revenue was derived: 68.6 per cent from the sale of electric energy, 31.2 per cent from the sale of gas, and 0.2 per cent from the sale of steam.

Public Hearing

After due notice public hearing on this application was held before Commissioner C. Lyn Fox and/or Examiner Manley W. Edwards. This application was consolidated for hearing purposes with Applications Nos. 39680 and 39681, and a total of 23 days of hearing were held during the period March 3 to July 23, 1958, inclusive, on the three applications the first 22 days being held in San Diego. Applicant introduced five all-department exhibits and three steam-department exhibits, and testimony by nine witnesses in support of its steam rate request. The Commission staff made an independent study of applicant's operations, presented five all-department exhibits and one steam-department exhibit, and cross-examined the applicant's witnesses for the purpose of developing a complete record to aid the Commission in deciding this rate increase request. Certain interested parties presented one exhibit and cross-examined the applicant's and the staff's witnesses. Closing briefs were filed on July 14, 1958, and argument before the Commission en banc was held on July 23, 1958, in San Francisco. The matter was submitted for Commission consideration at the close of the day of argument and now is ready for decision.

Applicant's Operations

Steam heat service is rendered in a limited portion of downtown San Diego, as shown in Chart 3-A of Exhibit No. S-1. As of December 31, 1957, the distribution system consisted of the following lengths of mains and was connected to the number of services shown below, in the several nominal pipe sizes listed:

<u>Size</u>	<u>Steam-Main Miles</u>	<u>Number of Services</u>
4-inch	0.02	2
6-inch	0.39	12
8-inch	1.00	48
10-inch	0.90	30
14-inch	0.53	8
18-inch	0.42	0
	<u>3.26</u>	<u>100</u>

As of December 31, 1957, there were 91 customers served from these distribution mains at a normal operating pressure of about 10 pounds per square inch gauge (psig) and one customer taking service directly from the boiler house of Station B at a pressure of about 235 psig.

Much of the steam load is for space heating and annual variations due to temperature have been the major cause of variation in annual sales. During the past five years the annual sales, in thousands of pounds, have ranged from a high of 143,144 thousand pounds in 1955 to a low of 129,951 thousand pounds in 1957.

Steam is produced, largely as a by-product, in connection with applicant's electric operations at Station B. The low pressure steam is obtained from the exhaust of a 3,000-kw house turbine taking steam at 235 psig and expanding the steam down to within the range of 10 to 20 psig. The energy produced by this house turbine in 1957 was recorded at 6,609,000 kwhr. Applicant states that the steam customer obtains full advantage of the electric production in computing its costs of providing this low pressure steam service.

Applicant's Position

Applicant represents that the rates and charges under its existing and now authorized schedules, tariffs, and special contracts for steam are unjustly and unreasonably low and confiscatory of its plants, property, and equipment devoted to the public use in the service of steam. Applicant also represents that the principal rate for steam service has been at the same level for many years and that the customers are enjoying steam at prewar prices, although the costs of producing and distributing steam in the postwar period have increased considerably.

Applicant's studies show the following earnings trend for steam sales, as reflected by its rate of return from this business:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Rate of Return</u>
1956 Recorded	(2.34)%
1957 Recorded	(5.34)
1957 Adjusted, Present Rates	(1.66)
1958 Estimated, (Present Rates	(1.46)
1958 Adjusted, Present Rates)	(2.08)
1958 Adjusted, Proposed Rates	6.54

(Red Figure)

The studies by the staff indicated a nearly similar low earning position for the years 1957 and 1958 under present rates. When the staff computed the results under the proposed rates it computed a rate of return of 6.31 per cent for the year 1958.

Earnings Comparisons for 1958

A more detailed comparison of the revenues, expenses, rate base and rate of return computed by the applicant and the staff for the year 1958 is set forth in the tabulation following.

	<u>Applicant</u> <u>Exh.No.S-1</u>	<u>Staff</u> <u>Exh.No.S-4</u>	<u>Adopted</u> <u>Results</u>
Operating Revenues			
General Service	\$108,800	\$103,100	\$119,100
Other	6,100	5,600	5,600
Total Revenues	<u>114,900</u>	<u>108,700</u>	<u>124,700</u>
Operating Expenses			
Production	86,800	78,300	89,800
Distribution	18,000	18,200	18,200
Customer Acctg. and Colg.	500	500	500
Administrative and General	8,500	8,500	8,500
Depreciation	14,900	14,800	15,000
Taxes, other than Income	11,000	12,000	12,000
Income Taxes	(18,400)	(18,400)	(15,800)
Total Expenses	<u>121,300</u>	<u>113,900</u>	<u>128,200</u>
Net Revenue	(6,400)	(5,200)	(3,500)
Depreciated Rate Base	307,400	309,100	312,000
Rate of Return	(2.08)%	(1.68)%	(1.12)%

(Red Figure)

Also shown on this tabulation are the figures being adopted by the Commission for the purpose of testing the reasonableness of applicant's request.

Revenues

The staff's revenue estimate is \$6,200, or 5.4 per cent, below applicant's estimate. The staff states that it utilized a 75 degree F. average temperature base and a 10-year average of degree day deficiencies to adjust the 1957 recorded and 1958 estimated and adjusted year so as to normalize sales for average temperature, whereas the applicant used a 65 degree F. base. Also the staff's revenue estimate reflects the effects of a fuel escalation clause in Special Contract No. 40 with fuel oil at \$2.44 per barrel, including sales tax, while the applicant's figures are computed on the basis of a price of \$2.86 per barrel. Recently the price of oil dropped 36 cents below the staff's figure.

Applicant discontinued the sale of steam under the open-end appliance schedule as of December 31, 1957; therefore the staff excluded sales for this category in the 1958 adjusted year. Applicant states that its revenues should be decreased by \$500 to reflect termination of this schedule.

The County of San Diego mentioned that the new County Courthouse will be manyfold the size of the present courthouse in San Diego, that a new law library has been built, and that two other major new buildings will be in service in 1958. In the estimates these buildings were included on only a partial year basis from the in-service dates. The County takes the position that since the customers in the steam department are so few, each one gained or lost should be accounted for and, in keeping with the concept of the adjusted test year, it would be reasonable to spread the usage of these new buildings over the entire year to get a fair concept of the test year for the steam department.

With respect to the County's position we have consulted the staff's work papers with the following results:

<u>New Building</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Estimated Annual Use (pounds)</u>
Security Title Building	2--1-58	1,000,000
Law Library	7--1-58	1,800,000
Union Title	9--1-58	2,000,000
County Courthouse	After 12-31-58	12,500,000
Total		<u>17,300,000</u>

For the partial year that the first three buildings will be in service the staff figured 2,475,000 pounds usage in 1958. Adding sales equal to the difference or 14,825,000 pounds to the staff's revenue estimate would increase it by \$16,600. We have considered this matter, and while the new County Courthouse may not be completed prior to 1960, its importance is such that, in the Commission's opinion, the present revenue estimate should take it into account in designing rates for the future. Accordingly, we will adopt a revenue estimate of \$124,700 for the test year 1958 as reasonable. The latter amount includes a \$600 adjustment for the effect of the fuel oil escalation clause in Contract No. 40 under the recently reduced fuel oil price.

Operating Expenses

The major item of expense is the cost of fuel for production of steam. The staff had figured the present rate for gas as 30.30 cents per Mcf; whereas the applicant had used 34.45 cents as the base price for gas, the rate it was proposing at the time that Exhibit S-1 was prepared. Since that time the Commission has decided that a base price of 35.25 cents per Mcf should be charged for steam plant gas. The effect of the added sales of steam and the higher rate for gas is to increase the staff's production expense estimate by \$12,900. Since the date of submission the posted price of fuel oil has dropped by 35 cents per barrel. Such lower price has the estimated effect of reducing operating expenses in the steam department by \$1,400. Our adopted results reflect this further change.

There is little difference between the estimates for distribution expenses, customer accounting and collecting expenses, and administrative and general expenses. The staff's depreciation

estimate is \$100 below applicant's; however, when the new buildings are considered for a full year the staff's depreciation estimate should be augmented by \$200. The staff's taxes, other than income, are \$1,000 higher than the applicant's and in our opinion are sufficiently high to cover the new buildings without additional increase. The income taxes depend upon the level of net revenue and will be adjusted to account for the revised net revenue being adopted.

The Commission finds reasonable and adopts the following expense figures for the adjusted test year 1958:

Production Expense	\$ 89,800
Distribution Expense	18,200
Customer Acctg. and Colg. Expenses	500
Administrative and General Expenses	8,500
Depreciation	15,000
Taxes, other than Income	12,000
Income Taxes	(15,800)

(Red Figure)

Rate Base

A representative of the U. S. Grant Hotel took the position that this steam heat is really a by-product of electric generation and questioned the level of certain charges for production labor. He also took the position that the turbine, which exhausts into the low pressure steam distribution system, should be included in the steam heat rate base and full credit given for all energy produced and delivered to the electric department. He pointed out that since 1944 the steam department has been running in the red, and stated that applicant should correct certain distortions as between the returns earned by its various classes of electric service prior to seeking a positive return from the steam department.

The Commission has considered the position taken by the representative and finds that the steam turbine unit has not been

included in either the staff's or the applicant's rate bases. The rate bases consist primarily of mains, services and meters as shown in the following summary:

	<u>Applicant Estimate</u>	<u>Staff Estimate</u>	<u>Adopted 1958 Test Year Results</u>
<u>Plant as of 12-31-57</u>			
Mains	\$472,600	\$472,600	\$472,600
Services	36,400	36,400	36,400
Meters	10,600	10,600	10,600
Subtotal Steam Plant	<u>519,600</u>	<u>519,600</u>	<u>519,600</u>
Common Utility Allocation	20,500	20,500	20,500
Weighted Avg. 1958 Additions	19,200	19,200	22,200
Total Weighted Avg. Steam Plant	<u>559,300</u>	<u>559,300</u>	<u>562,300</u>
Deduction for Depreciation	<u>250,800</u>	<u>250,400</u>	<u>250,500</u>
Weighted Avg. Net Steam Plant	308,500	308,900	311,800
<u>Modifications</u>			
Contributions in Aid of Constr.	(3,100)	(3,100)	(3,100)
Customers Advances for Constr.	(11,600)	(11,600)	(11,600)
Other	100	200	200
Material and Supplies	13,500	14,700	14,700
Working Cash			
Weighted Avg. Depre. Rate Base	<u>307,400</u>	<u>309,100</u>	<u>312,000</u>

(Red Figure)

The staff's rate base is \$1,700, or 0.55 per cent, higher than the applicant's. The difference here results from a larger material and supplies allowance and slightly lower depreciation deduction by the staff.

The question as to whether or not the steam department is receiving proper credit for the electricity produced by the turbine has been considered by the Commission. Under the method used by the staff and the applicant, credit is given in the quantity of fuel to produce the steam. The staff figured that 178,000 equivalent gas Mcf or 194 billion Btu of heat units would be required to produce and send out 194,000,000 pounds of steam. Assuming the heat content in the steam at 1,175 Btu per pound, the total send-out is

228 billion Btu of heat units. If a boiler efficiency of 85 per cent is figured, the steam department is receiving, free of cost, 68 billion Btu of heat units.

In the Commission's opinion the steam department is receiving reasonable fuel cost credit for the electric generation; and since no capital charges are assessed against the steam department for the turbine unit, we cannot find that the method used by the staff and the applicant is unreasonable. Furthermore, we have considered the level of the various expenses charged to the steam department and find them reasonable for rate-making purposes. While the method of computation proposed by the U. S. Grant Hotel's representative would probably yield similar results, his method has the disadvantage that it would put the steam department into the electric business because a sale of electricity would be involved.

We have augmented the staff's rate base by \$2,900 because of the allowances for the new buildings on a full year basis. Accordingly, we adopt and find reasonable a rate base of \$312,000 for the test year 1958.

Rate of Return

It is applicant's contention that rates should be prescribed to produce earnings to yield an average 6.55 per cent rate of return on the basis of the estimated adjusted test year 1958 for its steam department, and the company as a whole. This matter, including a review of the positions of the several appearances who presented evidence or otherwise indicated a position on rate of return, is more fully discussed in our concurrent decisions for applicant's gas and electric operations. In the interest of avoiding duplication this material will not be repeated here.

Upon careful consideration of the evidence before us, we are of the opinion and find that a rate of return of 6.30 per cent is fair and reasonable for applicant's steam department for the estimated year 1958. When a rate of return of 6.30 per cent is applied to the depreciated rate base of \$312,000 hereinbefore found reasonable, an over-all increase in annual gross revenue of \$51,500 is found to be required. This increase is approximately 89 per cent of the increase in steam department revenues finally requested by applicant.

Such finding will require a very sharp increase in rates (about 41 per cent) and in order that the customers might have time to adjust their budgets and operations to such higher rates the increase will be provided in two steps; approximately one half now and the remainder one year from now.

Rate Spread

Applicant recognized that a very sharp increase would be required (in the order of 50 per cent) and proposed a change from the present minimum charge form of rate to the customer charge form of rate. Applicant represents that since the original cost less depreciation of the steam distribution plant is more than \$3,000 per customer, an average customer charge exceeding \$25 per customer per month could be justified. However, such a high customer charge would cause disproportionate increases in bills to some of the smaller customers using small quantities of steam under the present \$2.50 minimum charge. Thereupon applicant selected \$5 per month as a proposed customer charge.

Applicant states that after development of the trial rates for Schedule No. 1 it gave consideration to the treatment of service supplied under Steam Contract No. 40. As a matter of tariff

simplification, it appeared desirable to applicant to arrange for billing of that service under the same rates as applied to other services. Although the steam supply conditions differ, there are factors which operate in offsetting directions. The steam supplied under Contract No. 40 is at a higher pressure, cannot be taken at exhaust from the house turbine, and therefore is more expensive to produce. However, the customer has provided all of the steam piping for that service outside of the boiler house, has furnished regulating valves to reduce boiler pressure to the the pressure of delivery, and less than average loss is involved in the distribution of this steam.

Transfer of the customer now supplied on Steam Contract No. 40 to the proposed No. 1 schedule would result in a lesser percentage increase of charges for that customer than the percentage increase for Schedule No. 1. However, the rates under Steam Contract No. 40 have been increased from time to time recently owing to escalation with fuel price under the terms of that contract. Therefore, applicant suggests the application of Schedule No. 1 rates with a service agreement covering the unique conditions of service on cancellation of Steam Contract No. 40.

Applicant mentioned that flat rate open-end appliance service had developed as an incidental operation some time in the past with charges based on estimated deliveries and tariff rates. Subsequent to the date applicant filed the application, through the cooperation of the customers who had been using open-end appliances, applicant now represents that all such service has been discontinued.

Applicant proposes a new Special Condition (c) in Schedule No. 1 which would provide for continuation of charges

during temporary reduction in load within any 12-month period; because its investment in steam facilities is a long-term investment, the cost of which cannot be avoided in the summertime, even though customers may not need steam service for temporary periods.

Applicant also is proposing a Special Condition (d) which explains that the Steam Schedule No. 1 is not applicable to standby service, auxiliary service, or service operated in parallel with the customer's steam generating apparatus, as it does not desire to supply that type of steam heating service.

Applicant now has a Steam Schedule No. 2 which contains a fuel price escalation clause. Applicant states this is the only schedule in its presently filed tariffs which contains such a clause. Presently there are no customers on this schedule, so applicant proposes to withdraw and cancel Schedule No. 2.

Findings and Conclusions

After considering the evidence of record the Commission finds and concludes:

1. That applicant's steam rate schedules, except Special Contract No. 40, are considerably below a reasonable level in light of present-day costs of fuel, labor, materials and supplies.
2. That applicant has delayed seeking a rate increase in Schedule No. 1 for such a period of time as to warrant too great an increase for a single step, but that the increase should be effected in two steps with a one-year interval between steps to provide time for the customers to adjust their budgets and operations to the higher rates.

3. That revisions in certain of applicant's tariff terms and special conditions substantially as proposed by applicant are reasonable and should be authorized; and, in addition, the rules should be revised to be consistent with present-day operating practices.

4. That the increases in rates and charges authorized herein are justified.

5. That the present rates, in so far as they differ from those herein prescribed, for the future are unjust and unreasonable.

6. That an order should be issued revising the rates, terms, conditions, and rules to the extent and in the manner provided by Appendix A herein.

O R D E R

San Diego Gas & Electric Company having applied for an increase in steam rates, public hearing thereon having been held, the matter having been submitted, the Commission being fully informed, and having found increases in rates in two steps as being justified; therefore,

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. Applicant is authorized to file in quadruplicate with this Commission, after the effective date of this order, in conformity with General Order No. 96, the schedule of rates shown in Appendix A attached hereto, and, upon not less than five days' notice to the Commission and to the public, to make said rates effective for service rendered on and after November 15, 1958.

2. Applicant is authorized, upon placing into effect the rate authorized by ordering paragraph 1 herein, to withdraw and cancel Schedule No. 2 and Steam Contract No. 40, and transfer the customer now served on Steam Contract No. 40 to new Schedule No. 1 on execution of a service agreement covering his unique conditions of service.

3. Applicant is authorized and directed to file a revised set of steam rules within ninety days after the effective date of this order, in quadruplicate with this Commission.

The effective date of this order shall be twenty days after the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 21st day of October, 1958.

S. Lynn Fox
President
R. J. [unclear]
Ralph [unclear]
William [unclear]
Theodore Jenner
Commissioners

APPENDIX A
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Changes in applicant's presently effective rates, rules and conditions are authorized as set forth in this appendix:

1. Schedule No. 1

a. Revise the rate section to the following:

Rate

Customer Charge: per meter per month \$5.00

Commodity Charge: monthly consumption in pounds:

	Effective Until 11-15-59 Rate per <u>1000 lbs.</u>	Effective 11-15-59 Rate per <u>1000 lbs.</u>
First 100 thousand lbs. per meter	\$1.05	\$1.26
Next 100 thousand lbs. per meter	.97	1.16
Next 100 thousand lbs. per meter	.88	1.06
All excess per meter77	.92

b. Revise the section under the minimum charge to the following:

The minimum monthly charge shall be equal to the customer charge.

c. Revise the section under special conditions to the following:

(a) Metering: Service under this schedule will be measured by means of a condensate meter and the customer must arrange his piping so that all steam supplied to the premises is condensed and returned to the meter installation except that, at the option of the company, the steam supplied to the customer may be measured by a steam flow meter.

(b) Temporary reduction in load: No adjustments will be made for a temporary reduction in load. If service is resumed for any load within 12 months after a temporary reduction the customer will be required to pay all charges which would have been billed if the temporary reduction had not been made.

(c) This schedule is not applicable to standby, auxiliary service, or service operated in parallel with a customer's steam generating apparatus.

(d) After November 14, 1959 applicant is authorized to refile this schedule to delete rates effective to November 15, 1959.

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2. Cancel Schedule No. 2 and transfer customer on special Contract No. 40 to Schedule No. 1.

OTHER TARIFF CHANGES

1. Title Page

- a. Insert on title page as follows:

Operating in
San Diego County
California

The following tariff schedules have been regularly filed with the Public Utilities Commission of the State of California and are the effective rates and rules of the company.

The Public Utilities Commission may amend or cancel these rates and rules by formal procedure and the company may amend or withdraw them after application to the Commission and receipt of authority for such action.

No officer, inspector, solicitor, agent or employee of the company has any authority to waive, alter or amend these tariff schedules, or any part thereof in any respect, except in the manner provided above. Applicants for service and customers must conform to and comply with these tariff schedules.

2. Preliminary Statement

- a. Combine the text so as to use fewer pages.
- b. Under description of service, delete items (a) and (b), substitute the following: "Detailed description of service is given under Rule No. 2."
- c. Substitute "rules" for "rules and regulations".
- d. Under Procedure to Obtain Service delete the last two sentences and add the following:

"Where an extension of the company's mains is necessary or a substantial investment is required to supply service, applicant will be informed as to the conditions under which service will be supplied. A copy of the application form is filed under Standard Forms in these tariffs."

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- e. Revise Section (4) to the following:
 - (4) Establishment of credit
 - Credit may be established as provided in Rule No. 6 by one of the following:
 - 1. Ownership of premises.
 - 2. Cash deposit in accordance with Rule No. 7.
 - 3. Satisfactory guarantee.
 - 4. Previous prompt payment of bills for 12 months prior to date of application.
 - f. Revise section 5(b) Discounts to the following:
 - Rates hereinafter listed are net rates and are not subject to discount.
 - g. Delete Section 5(c).
 - h. Provide a new map to replace PUC Sheet No. 1-H.
3. On all tariff sheets filed under this order eliminate reference to predecessor companies and replace California Railroad Commission with Public Utilities Commission of the State of California.

APPENDIX B

LIST OF APPEARANCES

For Applicant: Chickering & Gregory by Sherman Chickering and C. Hayden Ames.

Protestants: City of National City by Robert O. Curran, James A. Bird and C. T. Mess; City of Escondido by Russell G. Taliaferro; City of Imperial Beach by John F. O'Laughlin; Mountain Empire Electric Cooperative, Inc., by John Coker and John F. O'Laughlin; Vista Irrigation District by Glenn E. Wright by Robert E. Kronemeyer.

Interested Parties: City of San Diego by Frederick B. Holoboff and Clarence A. Winder; County of San Diego by James Don Keller, Bernard L. Lewis, Samuel S. Bloom and Jean L. Vincenz; California Manufacturers Association by Brobeck, Phleger & Harrison by Robert N. Lowry; Southern California Edison Company by Rollin E. Woodbury, C. Robert Simpson, Jr., and Earl R. Sample; California Farm Bureau Federation by Bert Buzzini; Perfectaire Manufacturing Company by Henry E. Walker; City of Chula Vista by Manuel L. Kugler; W. D. MacKay, Commercial Utility Service, for Challenge Cream Butter Association, U. S. Grant Hotel, Piggly Wiggly of San Diego and Chamber of Commerce of Solana Beach; City of Escondido by Russell G. Taliaferro; Mountain Empire Electric Cooperative, Inc., by John Coker and John F. O'Laughlin; College Grove Center by Newlin, Tackabury & Johnston by George W. Tackabury; City of El Cajon and Chamber of Commerce of El Cajon by Donald W. Smith and F. Joseph Doerr; City of Oceanside by Dale Austin and Bruce Smith; Department of Defense and other Executive Agencies of the United States by Harold Gold, Reuben Lozner and Clyde F. Carroll; City of La Mesa by Gilbert Harelson.

Commission Staff: R. T. Perry, W. R. Roche and Theodore Stein.

LIST OF WITNESSES

Evidence was presented on behalf of the applicant by: E. D. Sherwin, H. G. Dillin, A. R. Cox, G. R. Gray, W. C. Mohler, John H. Woy, C. P. deJonge, L. R. Knerr, R. J. Phillips, H. A. Noble, and Louis J. Rice, Jr.

Evidence was presented on behalf of the protestants and interested parties by: George A. Scott, Phillip Lyon, Allen Elijah, Roderick R. Kirkwood, Robert G. Rogo, Paul M. Sapp, Arthur M. Dunstan, James K. MacIntosh, W. W. Eyers, Orville M. Spear, Clarence A. Winder, James A. Bird, and W. D. MacKay.

Evidence was presented on behalf of the Commission Staff by: David F. La Hue, Richard R. Entwistle, Louis W. Mendonsa, Robert C. Moeck, Leonard S. Patterson, and Robert W. Beardslee.