

Decision 89 09 040 SEP 7 1989

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

KENNETH M. WOODS,

Complainant,

vs.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON COMPANY,

Defendant.

ORIGINAL

(ECP)

Case 88-06-049

(Filed June 27, 1988)

Kenneth Maurice Woods, for himself, complainant.
David M. Sturn, for Southern California Edison
Company, defendant.

OPINION

Summary of Decision

This decision finds that complainant Kenneth M. Woods (Woods) used the amount of electricity as billed by Southern California Edison Company (SCE). The complaint is denied.

Positions of Parties

A. Woods

Complainant Woods requests that the Commission order SCE to correct and average his electric bills, which he believes are in error. Woods states that his bills are sometimes double to quadruple the normal amount, due to errors which include meter reading. He claims that the SCE meter readers have read the wrong meter at times by not following the numbering sequence for the meters at the apartment complex.

Woods' electric bills varied from about \$28 to over \$90 a month, indicating average daily usage ranging from 10.2 to 27.8 kilowatt-hours per day (kWh/d). Woods argues that his consumption cannot vary by the amounts indicated by the billings, since he resides alone, is gone much of the time, and uses little or no heat

or air-conditioning. Therefore, the usage should not vary significantly from month to month.

Woods resided at 200 West Arbor Vitae, Apartment 2, Inglewood, California during the period in dispute, May 16, 1986 to April 4, 1988. The apartment is all-electric.

Woods alleges a pattern of billing errors and overcharges that have occurred since May 1986. This has caused a sense of frustration on his part and has made it difficult for him to pay the bills. As a result, he felt forced to move to an apartment served with both gas and electric. The electric bill at his current apartment, which has gas service, is only \$14 to \$17 per month.

B. SCE

SCE opposes any adjustment to Woods' electric bills.

SCE states that it tested Woods' meter for accuracy three times during Woods' residency at the apartment. Each time the meter was found to be operating within the allowable limits of accuracy. SCE also checked for electrical shorts and faults at Woods' apartment and found none.

SCE acknowledges that it misread Woods' meter on three occasions, but states that it corrected the bills before Woods paid them. SCE believes that the corrected bills were accurate.

SCE gave Woods a credit of \$75 early in Woods' residency at the apartment as a good will gesture, since it felt that Woods may not have been aware of the amount of electricity an all-electric apartment can use. SCE felt that this credit would help Woods adjust and understand conservation measures that could help reduce his usage.

SCE's witness, Freddie Taylor, Jr. (Taylor), offered an exhibit listing Woods' connected appliances. Taylor testified that in his experience Woods' usage is consistent with his connected load. Taylor notes that the usage is noticeably higher during the

summer and winter periods, indicating some heating and air-conditioning usage.

Discussion

The undisputed evidence in this case is that Woods' meter was accurate and that SCE's inspection found no sign of electrical shorts or faults. SCE admits that it misread Woods' meter on three occasions, but SCE has corrected these bills.

Woods claims that he could not have used the amount of electricity he was billed, and that he used little or no heat or air-conditioning. Yet, his consumption patterns show significantly higher usage during summer and winter seasons. For example, his average daily usage varied from about 12 to 14 kWh/d during most mild periods to about 25 to 28 during severe cold and hot periods. Woods apparently used some heat and air-conditioning during those periods.

Taylor testified that Woods' connected load supports his recorded usage. We consider that Woods has a connected load of 4,850 watts for heating in the bedroom and bathroom. If this heating were used only two hours a day during the cold periods, the usage would increase by:

$$2 \times 4,850 \div 1000 = 9.7 \text{ kWh/d.}$$

During the cold period of the early 1988 winter, Woods usage of 24.6 kWh/d is about 10 to 12 kWh/d higher than his normal period average. This appears reasonable, assuming some minimal amount of heating.

Similarly, the 1,325-watt air-conditioner would add significantly to the usage when operated during the hot periods. Although the load is less than for heating, an air-conditioner needs to operate more than just a few hours a day to provide comfort during hot weather. During the late summer of 1986, Woods' usage averaged 21.9 to 27.8 kWh/d, about 10 to 14 kWh/d higher than normal.

Woods' other connected load is average, except for a separate 14.2-cubic foot freezer.

Woods has presented no convincing evidence that the electricity billed was not used by him. Customers frequently believe that they must have used less energy than the meter indicates. Yet, in this case, the meter was tested for accuracy, no shorts or faults were found, and the usage is consistent with the connected load.

We conclude that Woods used the amount of electricity as billed.

We will deny the complaint.

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The \$129.94 fee impounded by the Commission shall be disbursed to Southern California Edison Company.
2. This complaint is denied.

This order becomes effective 30 days from today.

Dated SEP 7 1989, at San Francisco, California.

G. MITCHELL WILK
President
FREDERICK R. DUDA
STANLEY W. HULETT
JOHN B. CHANAN
PATRICIA M. ECKERT
Commissioners

I CERTIFY THAT THIS DECISION
WAS APPROVED BY THE ABOVE
COMMISSIONERS TODAY.

Wesley Franklin

WESLEY FRANKLIN, Acting Executive Director

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We conclude that Woods used the amount of electricity as billed.

We will deny the complaint.

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that this complaint is denied.

This order becomes effective 30 days from today.

Dated _____, at San Francisco, California.