

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 86857

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Dee V. Lund,

Complainant,

vs.

Southern California Edison Company,

Defendant.

Case No. 10146
(Filed July 23, 1976)

K. Gunnar Lund and Dee V. Lund,
for complainant.
Kingsley B. Hines, Attorney at
Law, for defendant.

O P I N I O N

Mrs. Dee V. Lund (complainant) seeks an order requiring an adjustment of the electric bills she received from Southern California Edison Company (Edison) to reflect the reasonable rate for electric service for the billing periods of September 3, 1975 to November 3, 1975 and for November 3, 1975 through January 6, 1976 and for an evaluation of her bills for previous years to determine if she has always been overcharged.

A public hearing was held before Examiner Jerry Levander in the city of Santa Ana on September 27, 1976 and the matter was submitted on that date.

Complainant's Position

Complainant, her husband, and a neighbor testified that:

- (1) Complainant's bill for the period ending November 3, 1975 was \$151.80 and her bill for the period ending January 6, 1976 was \$110.60.
- (2) Another couple resided in complainant's home from September 4, 1975 through October 15, 1975. This couple used complainant's air conditioning equipment and circulating fan for 15 or 16 days. Complainant recognized that running the fan would increase her bill.
- (3) From October 15, 1975 through January 23, 1976 complainant was the primary occupant of the home because her husband was traveling and was home only occasionally.
- (4) During the four and one-half years complainant and her husband owned the property at 18082 Beneta Way, Tustin, their electric bills never exceeded \$75.
- (5) Since moving to San Juan Capistrano, complainant's electric bills from San Diego Gas & Electric Company have been approximately \$20 per month. Complainant is using the same appliances as she used in Tustin except for the elimination of a pool pump and of air conditioning equipment.
- (6) A field representative of Edison checked the pool and air conditioner and advised complainant that her bill problem was not caused by the swimming pool motor and that the purchasers of complainant's former home are paying lower bills than complainant had paid. Complainant said that the air conditioning was turned off during the period in question, when she lived in the house, and the thermostat on the heater was disconnected until December 1975.

- (7) Complainant's former neighbors, the Martins, have the same appliances as complainant except that the Martins have no air conditioner. The Martins have an electric stove. The complainant and her husband had a gas stove. Four active children live in the Martins' house. Complainant's electric bills were higher than the Martins' bills.

Edison's Position

Edison's evidence submitted through the testimony of a customer service representative and a meter test supervisor shows that:

- (1) Edison's meter recording the usage of complainant's former home in Tustin meets the accuracy standards prescribed by the Commission. The meter was under registering usage.
- (2) No malfunction or grounding condition existed which could be responsible for the increased usage during the disputed period.
- (3) Complainant's former home was equipped with air conditioning units with a total capacity of 9,600 watts, which included a circulating fan in the house, a fan and two large compressor units located outside of the house.
- (4) Operation of this air conditioning equipment for five or six hours per day during a billing period could, by itself, result in a bill of \$150.
- (5) Another neighbor complained about the noise caused by complainant's air conditioning equipment during the time complainant's house was occupied by another couple.
- (6) The weather during September to November, 1975 was extremely warm compared to normal temperatures for that time of year.

- (7) Bills on the whole of Edison's system were high at that time because of increased air conditioning usage.
- (8) All of Edison's bills to complainant were based upon its filed tariffs.

Edison contends that complainant has failed to state a cause of action because complainant made no allegation that her meter was incorrectly read or was operating improperly; that complainant did not allege that Edison was charging any rates other than those established by the Commission as fair, just, and reasonable for the type of service rendered, and that the complaint should be dismissed.

Discussion

The complaint requests an order that (1) "The bill for this period of time be adjusted to reflect the reasonable rate." and (2) "The bills for the previous years be evaluated to determine if we have always been overcharged."

It is obvious from the context of the hearing that the complaint relates to the amount of the bills rather than the reasonableness of Edison's rates. Complainant presented no evidence of an error in computing her bills.

The high usage in the November 1975 bill could be attributed to the air conditioning usage during the period that another couple occupied the complainant's former residence. The electrical equipment supplying complainant's former residence could readily consume the amount of electricity utilized at that residence.

The specific cause for the above normal January 1976 bill cannot be ascertained on this record. Edison's exhibit showing

temperature data for the nearest weather station to complainant's former home (which is located closer to the ocean than is Tustin) shows that there were only five days in that billing period during which the high temperature exceeded 80 degrees, three of which were in the high 80's.

Exhibit 1 shows the daily usage from November 3, 1975 to January 6, 1976 was 51.9 kilowatt-hours per day. A follow-up spot check on January 19, 1976 shows a daily usage of 50.6 kilowatt-hours per day. Edison's closing bill to complainant for January 6, 1976 to January 26, 1976 shows a daily average usage of 49.1 kilowatt-hours per day.

Complainant's electric consumption was measured through an accurately measuring meter. There were no abnormal conditions relating to any electrical equipment used by complainant which would cause abnormal electrical usage. Complainant was billed in accordance with Edison's tariffs.

~~Findings~~ There is no basis for granting any relief to complainant.

Findings

1. The complaint is based upon the magnitude of complainant's November 1975 and January 1976 bills from Edison.
2. The electrical equipment used at complainant's former home was capable of utilizing all of the consumption billed.
3. The meter measuring complainant's usage was accurate.
4. There were no abnormal conditions which would waste electrical energy billed to complainant.
5. Increased air conditioning usage caused by above normal temperatures during the period complainant's former residence was occupied by another couple could account for the magnitude of complainant's November 1975 bill.

6. The causes of the above-normal consumption of electricity appearing on the January 1976 bill cannot be readily determined from record. Approximately the same high level of usage continued when a test reading was made on January 19, 1976 and for the period covered by Edison's closing bill to complainant.

7. Billings were made in accordance with Edison's filed tariffs. ✓

The Commission concludes that the relief requested should be denied.

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that the relief requested is denied.

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

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 14th day of JANUARY, 1977.

Robert Balceron
President

William Spivak, Jr.

Leonard Ross

Commissioners

Commissioner Vernon L. Sturgeon, being necessarily absent, did not participate in the disposition of this proceeding.