

Decision No. 92803

MAR 17 1981

ORIGINAL

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of SOUTHWEST GAS)
CORPORATION for Authority to)
Increase Natural Gas Rates)
in San Bernardino County,)
California.)

Application No. 59359
(Filed December 31, 1979)

SUPPLEMENTAL OPINION AND ORDER GRANTING
EXTENSION OF TIME

By a letter dated February 20, 1981 (See Appendix A) Southwest Gas Corporation (Southwest) requests an extension of time to comply with Ordering Paragraph 4a of Decision No. 92507 dated December 16, 1980. An implied requirement of the recommendations contained in paragraph 4a was that Southwest will implement a zero interest financing plan (ZIP) patterned after the one which was requested by Pacific Gas and Electric Co. (PG&E) in its Application No. 59537. Southwest, in its late filed Exhibit 10, agreed to file its ZIP application by December 1, 1980 (patterned after PG&E's ZIP) upon review of the Commission's decision in that application.

Southwest now requests an additional 60 days in order to file its ZIP for the following reasons:

1. Southwest has a limited staff available to prepare a ZIP, especially in comparison to the much larger California utilities.
2. Southwest's conservation staff lost through promotion one of its key employees within the past month.
3. Southwest has experienced a much greater level of conservation activity in recent months and is preparing for Nevada Public Service Commission hearings on the federally mandated Residential Conservation Service program on February 26 and 27, 1981.
4. Southwest has been engaged in additional conservation planning as part of an anticipated rate application for its northern California service area.
5. Other California utilities are expected to soon file ZIPs with the Commission. Southwest believes that such plans may provide assistance to Southwest in developing a ZIP which is particularly suited to Southwest's diverse service areas.

The Energy Conservation Branch staff recommends the petition be granted on an ex parte basis. It appears that for such a short extension of time a public hearing would serve no useful purpose. The order should be made effective the date hereof.

Findings of Fact

1. Circumstances beyond Southwest's control have made it impossible to meet the requirements it agreed to during the hearings for Application 59359.
2. A specific deadline should be ordered.
3. The sixty days requested appear to be a reasonable time extension.
4. Therefore, Southwest should be required to file its ZIP application on or before May 1, 1981.


Conclusion of Law


The extension of time requested by Southwest is reasonable and should be granted.


IT IS ORDERED that Southwest is hereby granted an extension of time to file its application for a zero interest financing program on or before May 1, 1981 in order to comply with Ordering Paragraph 4a of Decision No. 92507.


The effective date of this order is the date hereof.

Dated MAR 17 1981, at San Francisco, California.



President






Commissioners



SOUTHWEST GAS CORPORATION

William A. Claerhout, General Attorney

RECEIVED

February 20, 1981

FEB 23 1981

Energy Conservation Team

Mr. Joseph E. Bodovitz
Executive Director
Public Utilities Commission
State of California
350 McAllister Street
San Francisco, California 94102

Dear Mr. Bodovitz:

Re: Request for Extension of Time for ZIP Program
Application No. 59359

In Decision No. 92507, dated December 16, 1980, the California Public Utilities Commission ("Commission") adopted certain conservation recommendations of the Commission Staff in the general rate case of Southwest Gas Corporation ("Southwest"). A specific requirement of those recommendations was that Southwest implement a zero interest financing plan ("ZIP") patterned after that which was requested by Pacific Gas & Electric Co. ("PG&E").

When it appeared that the PG&E ZIP would not be approved as early as anticipated, Southwest requested additional time within which to comply with the filing requirement. Mr. George Amaroli, Chief of the Energy Conservation Branch advised Southwest that the request would be granted with the understanding that a ZIP be filed within 30 days after the issuance of the decision in PG&E Application No. 59537. Decision No. 92653, including approval of a PG&E ZIP was issued on January 28, 1981.

Southwest hereby respectfully requests an additional 60 days within which to file its ZIP. The reasons for this request are as follows:



Mr. Joseph E. Bodovitz
February 20, 1981
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1. Southwest has a limited staff available to prepare a ZIP, especially in comparison to the much larger California utilities.
2. Southwest's conservation staff lost through promotion one of its key employees within the past week.
3. Southwest has experienced a much greater level of conservation activity in recent months and is preparing for Nevada Public Service Commission hearings on the federally mandated Residential Conservation Service program on February 26 and 27, 1981.
4. Southwest has been engaged in additional conservation planning as part of an anticipated rate application for its northern California service area.
5. Other California utilities are expected to soon file ZIPs with the Commission. Southwest believes that such plans may provide assistance to Southwest in developing a ZIP which is particularly suited to Southwest's diverse service areas.

Southwest hereby affirms that it remains committed to filing a ZIP as soon as practicable. However, in order to accomplish the task with reasonable deliberation, an additional 60 days to on or about May 1, 1981 will be required.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Very truly yours,

SOUTHWEST GAS CORPORATION

Wm. A. Claerhout

WAC:t

cc: ALJ Albert Porter
Walter Cavagnaro
Stan Ferraro
Grayson Grove
George Amaroli