

From: Julie Orchard
To: Livingston, Merilee
Date: 1/5/2009 8:36 AM
Subject: Fwd: Regarding the recent PSC decision to increase the price of natural gas for automobiles

Here is another comment that should be added to 07-057-13 and 08-057-21. Thanks. JPO

>>> David Brewer 12/26/2008 4:24 PM >>>
To the Utah Public Service Commission:

I am an owner of a natural gas automobile that I purchased new one year ago. My intentions for doing so were three-fold: 1) to drive a cleaner car that is better for the environment. 2) to use domestic fuel so that we are less dependent on foreign oil, and 3) to save money over using gasoline.

While the cost of natural gas was not the highest reason on my list, it certainly formed a part of my decision. I felt that Utah, in contrast to other states, was charging a fair price for natural gas, and that the cost incentive would help many drivers make the switch to the cleaner and locally-produced fuel, even in spite of the relatively sparse availability of filling stations. In short, I felt it was time to do the right thing, and buy a new car that would do a much better job of keeping the environment cleaner and reducing our dependence on foreign oil. I would have saved quite a bit of money in the short and long-term if I had just kept the gasoline car I had (which was already paid off).

Your commission's recent decisions to increase the cost of natural gas for automobiles singles out a specific consumer class and appears to be punitive toward that class, even when you take into account Michele Beck's comments about the unfairness of the cost structure as it exists today. While I don't generally support government involvement in subsidizing unrealistic costs for small subset of the general public, I'm dismayed that you disregard the effect of your decision that will quash a nascent grass-roots effort by some of the public to invest in cleaner and domestic fuels, for the purpose of saving the residential and industrial customers 0.64% of their natural gas bill. Such attention to this when there are far larger utility issues seems out of place and priority.

I was further disappointed when it was reported that officials at Questar Gas Co. were surprised by your move. That kind of statement by Questar indicates a lack of planning and coordination on your part, and gives no incentive for Questar to spend anything on improving the underlying infrastructure. If the comments by Darren Shepherd are correct, it would appear to contradict those of Michele Beck that this change is "bringing the cost of purchasing that natural gas in line with the cost of providing it.", since Mr. Beck speaks of this in terms of how increased revenue would be spent.

The facts as they have been reported seem to support the notion that you have the intention to be punitive to me as a gas customer, that you made the decision arbitrarily, that you failed to fulfill your role to assist the public, that you failed to coordinate with Questar to ensure that revenue is used properly for the public good, and that you are not operating in an organized and prioritized fashion. My confidence in you as a commission has been severely affected by this action.

I would support the rate hike on Natural Gas for automobiles had it been made with more consideration for the impact to customers of that fuel, and if it had been strongly tied to improvements for infrastructure. But to make an open-ended decision such as this seems

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unprofessional and inconsiderate, and I can't support it. Please reconsider your decision by getting elements of the consumer public involved in the discussion, as well as Questar, and work out a plan that will be of value to all of the public, will retain incentives to invest in cleaner and locally-produced fuels, and will help build infrastructure for the future. I believe you owe the public a much better accounting of your role than what has been provided with your recent decision.

Regards,

David G. Brewer