BEFORE THE

INDIANA UTILITY REGULATORY COMMISSION

VERIFIED	PETITION	OF THE	BOARD	\mathbf{OF})		
DIRECTORS	FOR	UTILITIES	OF	THE)		
DEPARTME	NT OF PUBL	IC UTILITIES	S OF THE	CITY)		
OF INDIAN	APOLIS, D/	B/A CITIZEN	NS THER	MAL,)		
FOR (1) AU	THORITY TO) ADJUST IT	S RATES	AND)		
		I UTILITY)	CAUSE NO. 4585	55
APPROVAL	OF A NEW S	CHEDULE O	OF RATES	AND)		
CHARGES,	AND (3) A	APPROVAL	OF CER	TAIN)		
REVISIONS	TO ITS T	ERMS AND	CONDIT	IONS)		
APPLICABL	E TO STEAM	I UTILITY SE	ERVICE)		

PETITIONER'S
EXHIBIT NO.

DATE

REPORTER

DIRECT TESTIMONY of DAVID J. WATHEN

On
Behalf of
Petitioner,
CITIZENS THERMAL

OFFICIAL EXHIBITS

Petitioner's Exhibit No. 8

1	Introduction

- 2 Q1. PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME AND BUSINESS ADDRESS.
- 3 A1. My name is David J. Wathen. My business address is 5 Concourse Parkway, Suite
- 4 1800, Atlanta, Georgia 30328.
- 5 Q2. BY WHOM ARE YOU EMPLOYED AND IN WHAT CAPACITY?
- 6 A2. I have been employed by WTW (formerly known as Willis Towers Watson) since
- 7 1996, and my position is Managing Director, Southeast Work & Rewards Practice
- 8 Leader in Atlanta. I am also the leader of WTW's utility industry compensation team.
- 9 WTW is a leading global advisory, broking and solutions company, which has over
- 45,000 associates throughout the world, who offer solutions in the areas of employee
- benefits, talent management, rewards, and risk and capital management.
- 12 Q3. PLEASE SHARE YOUR EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND.
- 13 A3. I graduated from Vanderbilt University in 1990 with a B.A. in Economics and earned
- an M.B.A. with an emphasis in Human Resources from The Owen Graduate School of
- 15 Management at Vanderbilt University in 1996.
- 16 Q4. PLEASE SHARE YOUR QUALIFICATIONS IN ASSESSING UTILITY
- 17 **COMPENSATION PROGRAMS.**
- 18 A4. In my 25 plus year career with WTW, I have assisted senior management and boards
- of directors at numerous companies in designing and assessing all aspects of their
- 20 executive compensation programs. Since joining the firm in 1996, I have consulted
- with numerous utilities and currently serve as the leader of the firm's utility industry
- compensation team. I have conducted competitive assessments of total compensation

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1 levels and at-risk compensation plans for numerous public power and investor-owned 2 utilities. Currently, I am providing compensation consulting services to several utility 3 clients located across North America, including Citizens Energy Group. 4 PLEASE DESCRIBE IN GENERAL TERMS THE COMPENSATION Q5. 5 SERVICES WTW PROVIDES TO ITS CLIENTS. 6 A5. WTW advises organizations throughout the globe on all aspects of their compensation 7 programs, with the goal of paying employees competitively and enabling these 8 organizations to attract, retain, motivate, and engage employees efficiently and cost-9 Typical areas of compensation consulting assistance include pay effectively. philosophy development, variable or at-risk compensation plan design, total 10 11 compensation benchmarking, and compensation structure development. 12 WHY DO ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS CITIZENS ENERGY GROUP Q6. RETAIN A CONSULTING FIRM SUCH AS WTW FOR COMPENSATION 13 14 **SERVICES?** 15 Organizations retain the services of compensation consultants like WTW because they A6. 16 need access to the expertise and resources that consulting firms have to offer regarding 17 current and emerging market practices, compensation program design and competitive WTW has extensive experience serving clients in the energy 18 market data. 19 services/utility industry, having served more than 150 energy services/utility industry organizations last year alone. Because we invest heavily in our energy services/utility 20 industry capabilities, we have rich competitive industry information that enables 21

Citizens Energy Group to benchmark its compensation programs against similar

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1		organizations in the U.S. Given WTW's breadth and depth of resources, we are
2		frequently engaged by companies to conduct competitive assessments of compensation
3		programs, including pay philosophy, compensation levels by position, at-risk
4		compensation plan design, and other consulting services.
5	Q7.	PLEASE SUMMARIZE THE GENERAL APPROACH THAT IS USED BY
6		WTW IN CONDUCTING AN EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION
7		BENCHMARKING STUDY.
8	A7.	An executive compensation benchmarking study can vary in depth and breadth of
9		analyses, but a study covering compensation benchmarking for one of our utility clients
10		would typically entail the following:
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26		 Review and validate the executive compensation philosophy Review key duties and responsibilities of executive positions to be included in the analysis and identify applicable compensation survey benchmark matches Benchmark analysis of selected executive positions using applicable industry-specific and/or general industry surveys covering the following market pay components: Base salary Short-term at-risk compensation Total cash compensation (base salary + short-term at-risk compensation) Long-term at-risk compensation Total direct compensation (total cash compensation + long-term at-risk compensation) Assess gaps to market in levels of compensation Identify possible compensation adjustments that would better align compensation with competitive market levels
27	Q8.	WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TESTIMONY IN THIS GENERAL RATE
28		CASE PROCEEDING FOR PETITIONER CITIZENS THERMAL?
29	A8.	The primary purpose of my testimony is to provide the Commission with an executive

compensation study examining competitive compensation levels for peer organizations

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that are reflective of Citizens Energy Group's market for executive talent as defined in the company's executive compensation philosophy.

The study WTW conducted demonstrates that the target total cash compensation (base salary + short-term at-risk compensation) provided to Citizens Energy Group executives aligns with the primary market reference point of municipal/public power utilities and investor-owned utilities as defined in the executive compensation philosophy established by Citizens Energy Group's Board of Directors (the "Board") and is reasonable relative to the competitive market for executive talent for similar industry positions. On the other hand, Citizens Energy Group's executive target total cash compensation falls well below market target total direct compensation (target total cash compensation + long-term at-risk compensation), as Citizens Energy Group eliminated the long-term at-risk compensation plan in 2014. In reaching these conclusions, WTW specifically focused on the following aspects of the Citizens Energy Group compensation program:

• Executive compensation philosophy; and

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• Competitive market positioning of target total cash compensation.

17 OVERVIEW OF CITIZENS ENERGY GROUP'S EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION PHILOSOPHY

18 Q9. DOES CITIZENS ENERGY GROUP HAVE A DEFINED EXECUTIVE 19 COMPENSATION PHILOSOPHY?

Yes, Citizens Energy Group's executive compensation philosophy, as defined by the Board, is to provide target total direct compensation that is competitive with the market median (50th percentile) of comparably-sized utility organizations for jobs of similar

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responsibility. The Board has reviewed and affirmed this executive compensation philosophy each year since at least 2014. The primary market for executive talent is defined by the Board as a blend of similarly-sized investor-owned and municipal/public power utilities. In addition, the Board identified the general industry as a secondary market for executive talent, particularly for functional roles (*i.e.*, Finance, Information Technology, Human Resources, etc.).

7 Q10. HOW DOES CITIZENS ENERGY GROUP'S EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

PHILOSOPHY COMPARE WITH OTHER UTILITIES?

WTW examined the proxy disclosures for 10 investor-owned utilities that are comparable in size to Citizens Energy Group (e.g., revenues ranged from approximately one-half to two times Citizens Energy Group's annual revenues of \$886 million) and participate in the 2021 Willis Towers Watson Energy Services Industry Executive Compensation Database. Peer companies examined are listed in Attachment DJW-1.

Based on WTW's review, we believe Citizens Energy Group's executive compensation philosophy remains well-aligned with investor-owned utility peers as almost all of the utility peers (8 of 10 utility peers) position their target total direct compensation at the market median (50th percentile) for some or all pay elements (2 utility peers did not disclose a targeted market pay position). Likewise, our consulting experience suggests that larger municipal/public power utilities, as well as general industry companies typically target executive total direct compensation at the market median (50th percentile).

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1	Q11.	IN YOUR OPINION, WHY IS BENCHMARKING WITH A PEER GROUP AN
2		APPROPRIATE WAY FOR THE BOARD TO ASSESS THE COMPETITIVE
3		POSITION OF EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION?
4	A11.	A compensation benchmarking study enables the Board to assess the competitive
5		position of executive compensation relative to a defined peer group, representing the
6		company's defined market for executive talent, and ensures alignment with the Board's
7		articulated executive compensation philosophy. By understanding the competitive
8		levels and mix of pay the Board is able to determine what adjustments, if any, are
9		needed to ensure a competitive compensation package is in place to continue to attract,
10		retain and motivate the executive talent needed to successfully lead the utilities and
11		other businesses operated and managed by Citizens Energy Group.
12	Q12.	IS THE EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION PHILOSOPHY ALIGNED PEER
13		GROUP OF INVESTOR-OWNED UTILITIES AND MUNICIPAL/PUBLIC
14		POWER UTILITIES USED TO MEASURE THE COMPETITIVENESS OF
15		EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION APPROPRIATE IN YOUR OPINION?
16	A12.	Yes. The 25 company peer group WTW used to assess the competitiveness of
17		executive compensation at Citizens Energy Group is based on utilities comparable in
18		size to Citizens Energy Group (revenues ranging from approximately one-half to two
19		times Citizens Energy Group revenues of \$886 million) that participated in the 2021
20		Willis Towers Watson Energy Services Industry Executive Compensation Database.
21		When developing a relevant peer group for benchmarking, a competitive range of one-
22		half to two times revenues is a standard practice in our business and is also utilized by

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for benchmarking executive positions at Citizens Energy Group (consisting primarily of investor-owned utilities and municipal/public power utilities) was chosen, as it reflects the primary market where the company competes for executive talent. Q13. DO OTHER MUNICIPAL AND PUBLIC POWER UTILITIES, LIKE CITIZENS ENERGY GROUP, INCLUDE INVESTOR-OWNED UTILITIES IN THEIR PEER GROUPS FOR BENCHMARKING EXECUTIVE POSITIONS? Yes. Based on my consulting experience, other large municipal and public power utilities include investor-owned utilities in their executive compensation benchmarking peer group. It is appropriate for them to do so, because these utilities need to be able to attract and retain executives with the requisite experience and expertise needed to manage large, complex organizations covering vertically integrated operations, multiple business/operating units and/or support functions needed to provide safe, reliable and cost effective services to customers. As noted in Petitioner's witness Jodi L. Whitney's testimony, Citizens Energy Group's officers are responsible for managing long-term strategic objectives, financial objectives, regulatory initiatives and overall operations for Citizens Energy Group's

Institutional Shareholder Services, a noted proxy advisor firm. The peer group used

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seven utilities. The utilities cover water, wastewater, natural gas and steam operations with four utilities regulated by the Commission under the municipal ratemaking statute and three regulated as investor-owned utilities. Given the complexity of operations and requisite experience, managerial and other skills needed to effectively run such an

1		organization, Citizens Energy Group has found investor-owned utilities to provide a
2		strong talent pool to meet their executive leadership needs.
3	SUMM	IARY OF WTW'S EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION BENCHMARKING STUDY
4	Q14.	DID YOU CONDUCT A COMPETITIVE BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS OF
5		CITIZENS ENERGY GROUP'S EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION
6		REFLECTIVE OF THE BOARD'S DEFINED MARKET FOR EXECUTIVE
7		TALENT?
8	A14.	Yes. The results of that analysis are included as Attachment DJW-2.
9	Q15.	PLEASE DESCRIBE HOW THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED.
10	A15.	WTW assessed the competitiveness of Citizens Energy Group's target total cash
11		compensation for 12 executive positions as compared against market target total direct
12		compensation. Target total cash compensation for Citizens Energy Group's officers is
13		defined as base salary + short-term at-risk compensation, as the long-term at-risk
14		compensation plan was eliminated by the Board in September of 2014.
15		To conduct this analysis, we reviewed compensation data provided to us by
16		Citizens Energy Group and examined competitive market data from the 2021 Willis
17		Towers Watson Energy Services Industry Executive Compensation Database. This
18		database is comprised of compensation data for over 135 energy services companies,
19		including investor-owned, municipal and public power utilities. WTW has been
20		conducting this survey for over 25 years.
21		In assessing the competitiveness of Citizens Energy Group's executive
22		compensation, we examined market data from the 2021 Willis Towers Watson Energy

Services Industry Executive Compensation Database, including a custom peer group reflecting 25 regulated utilities with revenues in a range of approximately one-half to two times Citizens Energy Group's revenues of \$886 million, as the primary market reference point for comparison (See Attachment DJW-3 for a listing of the peer companies).

Q16. PLEASE SUMMARIZE HOW CITIZENS ENERGY GROUP'S EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION COMPARED TO THE MARKET MEDIAN.

A16. The table below summarizes the aggregate variance of compensation for the Citizens Energy Group executives as compared to the market median (50th percentile) for each pay component of the utility peers examined by WTW:

	Aggregate Variano	ce from Market Media	ın (50 th Percentile)
	Base Salary	Target Total Cash Compensation	Target Total Direct Compensation
Citizens Energy Group Executives	-4%	-2%	-42%

When determining the competitiveness of compensation relative to market, WTW defines an executive position as being competitive or "at market" if compensation is within +/-15% of the market rate of compensation.

In aggregate, Citizens Energy Group executive pay falls within the competitive range of the market for base salary and target total cash compensation (base salary + short-term at-risk compensation), but falls well below the competitive market range when compared to the Board's targeted market position of the 50th percentile of target total direct compensation (base salary + short-term at-risk compensation + long-term

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1		at-risk compensation), which is due primarily to the lack of long-term at-risk
2		compensation given the elimination of this plan in 2014.
3	Q17.	ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE AT-RISK INCENTIVE COMPENSATION
4		AVAILABLE TO CITIZENS ENERGY GROUP EXECUTIVES?
5	A17.	Yes.
6	Q18.	IN YOUR OPINION IS THE AT-RISK INCENTIVE COMPENSATION
7		PROVIDED FOR CITIZENS ENERGY GROUP EXECUTIVES ALIGNED
8		WITH COMPETITIVE UTILITY MARKET PRACTICE?
9	A18.	No. While Citizens Energy Group's inclusion of a short-term at-risk incentive plan for
10		executives is aligned with utility market practice, the lack of a long-term at-risk
11		incentive plan is the primary driver of executive compensation being 42% below the
12		market median, on average, of the utility peer group. The use of short and long-term
13		at-risk compensation plans for executives is almost universal among investor-owned
14		utilities. As it relates to the 25 regulated utility peer group used for benchmarking
15		Citizens Energy Group executive compensation, almost two-thirds of the peers utilize
16		a short-term at-risk compensation plan and a majority utilize a long-term at-risk
17		compensation plan for their senior executive positions.

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1 CONCLUSION

- 2 Q19. WHAT ARE THE CONCLUSIONS OF YOUR ANALYSIS OF
- 3 COMPENSATION FOR THE OFFICERS OF CITIZENS ENERGY GROUP
- 4 WHEN COMPARED TO THE PEER GROUP DETERMINED BY THE
- 5 **BOARD?**
- 6 A19. Overall, our analysis of utility peers aligned with the Board's articulated executive
- 7 compensation philosophy indicates that Citizens Energy Group's executive
- 8 compensation is generally competitive with the utility peers' market median base salary
- 9 and target total cash compensation but falls well below the market median competitive
- range for target total direct compensation. Given the competitive market for talent,
- 11 Citizens Energy Group must provide market competitive compensation in order to be
- able to attract, retain and motivate officers needed to successfully run Citizens Energy
- Group's seven utilities and other businesses.
- 14 Q20. DOES THIS CONCLUDE YOUR PREPARED TESTIMONY?
- 15 A20. Yes.

VERIFICATION

The undersigned affirms under the penalties for perjury that the foregoing testimony is true to the best of his knowledge, information and belief.

David J. Wathen

Attachment DJW-1 to the Direct Testimony of David J. Wathen

Executive Compensation Philosophy Analysis Peer Group

- 1. Avista Corporation
- 2. Black Hills Corporation
- 3. Chesapeake Utilities Corporation
- 4. Essential Utilities, Inc.
- 5. Idaho Power Company
- 6. NorthWestern Energy
- 7. NW Natural
- 8. Otter Tail Power Company
- 9. PNM Resources, Inc.
- 10. South Jersey Industries

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Introduction

Background

The Compensation and Finance Committee of the Board of Directors of Citizens Energy Group ("Citizens") engaged Willis Towers Watson (WTW) to conduct a competitive market review of Citizens' top twelve (12) positions

· The table below summarizes Citizens' executive compensation philosophy that was defined by the Compensation and Finance Committee:

Component	Philo	Philosophy
Market for Talent	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	Investor-Owned Utilities Municipal/Public Power Utilities ("Public Power")
		General Industry
Competitive Market Pay Reference Point	• F	Primary market reference point is investor-owned utilities and municipal/public power utilities
	• Se	Secondary market reference point (functional roles) is general industry
Targeted Market Pay Position	ž •	Market 50 th percentile
Targeted Market Pay Component	•	Target total direct compensation (base salary + short-term
	<u>=</u>	incentive + long-term incentive)

Introduction

Background (continued)

Given Citizens' defined executive compensation philosophy, the Board and Management requested an analysis of competitive compensation data from the following two market perspectives:

- 1. Combined Investor-Owned and Public Power Utilities
- Reflects the primary market for executive talent as defined by the Board and Management
- Data comprises investor-owned utilities, municipal/public power and joint action agencies
- 2. General Industry
- Reflects the secondary market for talent for selected functional roles (e.g., HR, Finance, IT, etc.) as defined by the Board and Management

Executive Summary

Primary Market for Talent: Investor Owned and Public Power Utilities

Based on the <u>investor owned and public power utility</u> data reviewed, the table below presents the variance of each executive's base salary, target total cash and target total direct compensation relative to the market

Median Market Data

Source: Willis Towers Watson Analysis; Citizens' Management

² TTDC (Target Total Direct Compensation) = base salary + target short-term incentive + long-term incentive; for Citizens, TTC equals TTDC because Citizens does not provide long-term incentives.
3 Aggregate reflects the sum of the value in each column where market data are available. The "% diff" column represents the percentage difference between the Current TTC and Current TTDC and TTDC columns and the market data. When market data are not available, Citizens' Current TTC and TTDC values are not included in the calculation.



¹ TTC (Target Total Cash) = base salary + target short-term incentive

Executive Summary

Secondary Market for Talent: General Industry

Based on the general industry data reviewed, the table below presents the variance of each executive's base salary, target total cash and target total direct compensation relative to the market

¹ TTC (Target Total Cash) = base salary + target short-term incentive

² TTDC (Target Total Direct Compensation) = base salary + target short-term incentive + long-term incentive; for Citizens, TTC equals TTDC because Citizens does not provide long-term incentives.

³ Aggregate reflects the sum of the value in each column where market data are available. The "% diff" column represents the percentage difference between the Current TTC and Current TTDC columns and the market data. When market data are not available, Citizens' Current TTC and TTDC values are not included in the calculation.

Attachment DJW-3 to the Direct Testimony of David J. Wathen

Executive Compensation Benchmarking Analysis Peer Group

- 1. Avista Corporation
- 2. Black Hills Corporation
- 3. Chesapeake Utilities Corporation
- 4. Colorado Springs Utilities
- 5. El Paso Electric Company
- 6. Energy Northwest
- 7. Essential Utilities Inc.
- 8. Great River Energy
- 9. Idaho Power Company
- 10. JEA
- 11. Knoxville Utilities Board
- 12. Lower Colorado River Authority
- 13. Nebraska Public Power District
- 14. NorthWestern Energy
- 15. NW Natural
- 16. Oglethorpe Power Corporation
- 17. Old Dominion Electric Cooperative
- 18. Omaha Public Power District
- 19. Orlando Utilities Commission
- 20. Otter Tail Power Company
- 21. Pedernales Electric Cooperative
- 22. PNM Resources, Inc.
- 23. Santee Cooper
- 24. Snohomish County PUD
- 25. South Jersey Industries