FILED December 2, 2022 INDIANA UTILITY REGULATORY COMMISSION

STATE OF INDIANA

INDIANA UTILITY REGULATORY COMMISSION

VERIFIED PETITION OF WESTFIELD GAS, LLC,) D/B/A CITIZENS GAS OF WESTFIELD FOR (1)) AUTHORITY TO INCREASE RATES AND) CHARGES FOR GAS UTILITY SERVICE AND) **APPROVAL OF A NEW SCHEDULE OF RATES**) AND CHARGES; (2) APPROVAL OF CERTAIN) **REVISIONS TO ITS TERMS AND CONDITIONS**) **APPLICABLE TO GAS UTILITY SERVICE; AND**) (3) APPROVAL PURSUANT TO INDIANA CODE) SECTION 8-1-2.5-6 OF AN ALTERNATIVE) **REGULATORY PLAN UNDER WHICH IT**) WOULD CONTINUE ITS ENERGY EFFICIENCY) PROGRAM **PORTFOLIO** AND ENERGY) **EFFICIENCY RIDER**)

CAUSE NO. 45761

INDIANA OFFICE OF UTILITY CONSUMER COUNSELOR'S

PUBLIC'S EXHIBIT NO. 7: OUCC CONSUMER COMMENTS

December 2, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

Hy M Rul

Jeffrey M. Reed Attorney No 11651-49 Deputy Consumer Counselor

	RNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments of which senders or unexpected email. ****
?	
COPY	ubmission For: OUCC_Contact_2361 - 1/19/22 7:36 PM
Title:	Mr.
Name:	Justin Dantzer
Email:	justin.dantzer@gmail.com
Address:	15243 Brownspring Dr Westfield, IN 46074
Telephone (Best number to reach you between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm, Eastern Time,	(317) 965-8991
Monday through Friday)::	

indicate the Citizens Gas of Westfield cause number and/or name of utility:: The suggested rate hike seems unfounded, for the reasons given -- higher operating costs, and infrastructure improvements due to growth. Current utility customers should not be paying for expansion, as there is no benefit for current utility customers for the expansion to occur. The expansion should be viewed as a long-term investment from the utility, enabling them to reach more customers. If anything, reaching more customers should enable costs to go down, especially given how tight knit all the new housing developments are in the area. As for the higher operating costs, I'm sure there have been some cost increases due to the current economic oddities, but a 20-25% increase is much too high. (per the example bills in news articles https://www.wishtv.com/news/local-news/citizens-gasof-westfield-proposes-rate-hike-asks-for-customercomments/) Your There are countless information sources indicating that **Comments::** the U.S. has a glut of natural gas reserves or found recoverable resources. If the actual cost of natural gas is higher presently, it is temporary due to fallout from COVID lockdowns, and unpreparedness by the utility industry in some states. If a rate adjustment is required to support the temporarily increased costs of natural gas, an appropriate amount should be assessed, and a shortterm adjustment considered. Given that demand will drop rapidly come spring, and production should increase (if it in fact degrades during winter months), the price adjustment should not be allowed to continue after that time. Should a nationwide production issue, or another extraneous emergency situation occur in 2023, a temporary price adjustment could then be considered at that time. Customers should not get locked in to an extended price increase, if prices are not swiftly reassessed when overall demand and material costs drop.

k links from unkno	RNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments o own senders or unexpected email. ****
2	
COPY	ubmission For: OUCC_Contact_2361 - 11/01/22 1:43 PM Mr.
Name:	Larry Gist
Email:	larry.gist@icloud.com
Address:	247 Moose Ln. Westfield, IN 46074
Telephone (Best number to reach you between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm,	(317) 518-7674

indicate the cause number and/or name of utility::	Citizens Gas Westfield
Your Comments::	Here we go again with yet another outrageous rate increase request. How can they honestly justify an 18% increase?!?! If anything the should only get an 8% increase to simply match inflation. We, as consumers, are being squeezed by companies left and right with their price increases. Yet, our wages are not matching those price increases. That money has to come from somewhere and generally it means we have to do with less to eat or something else. I am firmly against this huge rate increase request.

This is an EX	Friday, October 21, 2022 3:40:40 PM This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments o links from unknown senders or unexpected email. ****		
2			
COPY	k Submission For: OUCC_Contact_2361 - . at 10/21/22 3:40 PM		
Title:	Mr.		
Name:	Douglas Castor		
Email:	douglasrcastor1@icloud.com		
Address:	16141 Brookhollow Drive Westfield, IN 46062		
Telephone (Best number te reach you between 8:00 am a 4:00 pm, Eastern Time, Monday through Friday)::	0		
If providi comments	-		

indicate the cause number and/or name of utility::

Your Comments:: A rate hike in Westfield is not even rational. Sharing only last year's bill rate and next years proposed bill rate only with limited information that is 50k in the air. Itemize all of your cost on a balance sheet that is audited. There is so much more information to be considered before a "significant" increase on an area that should strategically cover its cost by addition payees being added in this area thus driving down PMPM cost if truly consumer centric. Energy companies have a monopoly and must be governed closely because of greed and waste.

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2	
СОРУ	Ibmission For: OUCC_Contact_2361 - 0/31/22 5:47 PM
Name:	Hal Levine
Email:	hallevine@yahoo.com
Address:	1708 Marshrose Drive Westfield, IN 46074
Telephone (Best number to reach you between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm,	(317) 874-8970

indicate the cause number and/or name of utility::

Citizens Gas of Westfield

Your Comments:: I don't understand why Citizens Gas needs to have such a large rate hike. If inflation in the US is at 8%, why do they need a rate hike of 18%. These kinds of rate hikes are what causes inflation in the first place. With regards to their system growing being the need for the rate hike, it makes sense that the system would need to grow as the city of Westfield continues to turn corn fields into developments. But, with more homes should come more income. If this is a temporary issue (they made the system larger in preparation of more homes, but the homes aren't there yet to pay for the growth), maybe there is another way. Maybe there could be a temporary charge or rate increase with the expectation that the rate would go down once enough volume is in place to cover the larger system. But in general, normal rate increases never seem to go down. I encourage a smaller rate increase. Thanks.

	RNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments common senders or unexpected email. ****
2	
COPY	ubmission For: OUCC_Contact_2361 - 10/21/22 7:21 AM
Name:	Lana Wilson
Email:	ljw0127@comcast.net
Address:	16621 brownstone ct Westfield , IN 46074
Telephone (Best	

indicate the Citizens gas of Westfield rate hike cause number and/or name of utility:: We live in Westfield and are very much opposed to Citizens Gas of Westfield's rate hike. We are on social security and trying to live within our budget I feel they should do the same. These past two years have been Your increasingly hard to manage our income with all the **Comments::** increases we've seen, I,e, gas and food prices. Now some other entity wants to again make it even harder to within our means. I feel there is no way citizens should be allowed to increase their rates too.

	ucc consumer Info Mitchell Wallace- Citizens Gas of Westfield Cause No. 45761 Wednesday, November 9, 2022 9:11:38 AM This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or links from unknown senders or unexpected email. ****				
CO	PY	omission For: OUCC_Contact_23	61 -		
Ti	tle:	Mr.			
Na	ame:	Mitchell Wallace			
En	nail:	mitchwallace119@gmail.com			
Ad	ldress:	15756 West Rail Dr Westfield, IN 46074			
(B to be an pn Th Ma	elephone est number reach you tween 8:00 n and 4:00 n, Eastern me, onday rough iday)::	(317) 219-9750			
co a s cas inc	providing mments on specific se, please dicate the use number	Citizens Gas of Westfield			

and/or name of utility::

Hello,

I do not think a rate increase is needed. More people are moving into Westfield and that means more people are going to be paying money to Citizens for their gas. For a single family home we are paying almost \$300 a month during the months when we have the heat on. In my opinion this just seems like Citizens wanting to make more money.

Your Comments::

> I will admit that its hard to see improvements in the system as a normal consumer so I cant comment on that but I feel the rate we are paying is already steep enough.

Thanks,

Mitchell

For: OUCC_Con):39 AM	Submission	ormstack Su
	Ms.	Title:
р	Mary Fillip	Name:
sn.com	cmjba@ms	Email:
therington Dr. N 46074	17373 Wet Westfield,	Address:
·9182	1 (317) 696-9	Telephone (Best number to reach you between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm, Eastern Time, Monday through Friday)::
·9182	(317) 696-	(Best number to reach you between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm, Eastern Time, Monday through

indicate the cause number and/or name of utility::	Citizens Gas
Your Comments::	Regarding the rate increase requested by Citizens Gas, while I understand that everyone's operating costs are increasing due to inflation, we need to stop when it impacts the basic needs of individuals. Gas is not an optional service for each person everyone needs/deserves the basic heating in our cold weather climate. Citizens should delay their price increase until our economy recovers to that each person can provide heating for their family.

nks from unknov	NAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments wn senders or unexpected email. ****
?	
COPY	Ibmission For: OUCC_Contact_2361 - 1/16/22 9:32 PM
Title:	Mr.
Name:	Chris Schmidt
Email:	c_schmidt@live.com
Address:	14830 Bixby Dr. Westfield, IN 46074
Telephone (Best number to reach you between 8:00 am and	(812) 774-3533

indicate the cause number and/or name of utility::	Citizen Gas of Westfield
Your Comments::	I am AGAINST their request with IURC for rate hike if 18%! With inflation at 40 year high, gas prices doubled, food costlier, etc while our paychecks have stayed the same, majority of our citizens can't afford this huge increase. If gas was collected at same rates as 5 years ago, there would be more supply to keep cost level with demand. Please allow only a modest increase now until the economy can improve. Sincerely, Chris S

		unexpected email. ****
	2	
COPY	ack Submission Fo	or: OUCC_Contact_2361 -
Title:		
Name:		Adam Goodnight
Email:		agoodnig85@gmail.com
Addre	ss:	955 W. Edenbridge Way Westfield, IN 46074
to reac	one (Best number h you between 8:00 d 4:00 pm, Eastern Monday through	
a speci indicat	riding comments on fic case, please te the cause number name of utility::	IURC Cause No. 45761 Citizens Gas Westfield
Vour	Comments::	In the last 2-3 years, citizens has raised rates substantially. How are consumers supposed to keep up when they are asking for nearly 20% at a time every 6

From:	Emily
To:	UCC Consumer Info
Subject:	Emily Chamberlin- IURC Cause No. 45761
Date:	Monday, November 7, 2022 8:48:51 AM

**** This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email. ****

Good afternoon,

I'm writing in response to the proposed rate increase. I tried numerous times to try and reach regarding the increase that happened with Duke energy with no success so I'm hoping that this reaches and you reconsider. As a resident of Westfield, our taxes are increasing, the electric monopoly for Duke increased quite a bit and now Citizens is asking for an increase. These companies received government bailouts. There are people on fixed incomes, people still barely making ends meet even though they are working 50+ hours a week and now we are facing yet another increase on a large company? At least when comcast increases their rates, we have the option to shop elsewhere-metro net, AT&T etc. but we don't get those options with our utilities. When will these large companies stop robbing the hardworking people just so that they can keep their homes warm in the winter and have the electricity to work to pay said bills.

Please please do not approve another rate hike!

Sincerely,

Emily Chamberlin

Sent from Proton Mail for iOS

: Wednesday, Nov This is an EXTERNA	nfo zens Gas of Westfield Cause No. 45761 rember 2, 2022 7:45:39 PM L email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open senders or unexpected email. ****	n attachments o
2		
COPY Submitted at 11/0		61 -
Title:	Mr.	_
Name:	Daniel Hilty	
Email:	justthehiltys@msn.com	
	324 North St Westfield, IN 46074	
Address:	westiend, in 40074	
Address: Telephone (Best number to reach you between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm, Eastern Time, Monday through Friday)::	(317) 201-1428	

Your Comments:: budget like the rest of us have to without raising rates. One of the reasons for switching from total electric to a gas furnace was to do it as inexpensive as possible. If rates are raised there will be no incentive to switch to natural gas.

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For	mstack Sul	omission For: OUCC_(Contact_2361 -
COI	PY		—
Subi		/21/22 8:30 PWI	
Tit	tle:	Mrs.	
Na	nme:	Erica Strahm	
En	nail:	ericastrahm@gmail.com	
Ad	ldress:	14701 Melbourne Ct Westfield, IN 46074	
(B) to be an pn Tin Mo thu	dephone est number reach you tween 8:00 n and 4:00 n, Eastern me, onday rough iday)::	(317) 753-2780	
col a s cas inc	providing mments on specific se, please dicate the use number		

and/or name of utility::	
Your Comments::	People are struggling to pay their bills as it is. Your proposed rate hikes will have a huge impact on people's lives. Also, have you ever cut rates when your costs have lowered? Or, will you cut prices when this period of inflation passes? This is something you should think about. Also, I've always thought your prices were quite high to begin with!

From:	Remo Mezzetta
То:	UCC Consumer Info
Subject:	Mercy & Remo Mezzetta- Citizens Gas of Westfield Cause No. 45761
Date:	Wednesday, November 2, 2022 11:36:48 AM

**** This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email. ****

Dear agency , the proposed rate hike by CEG is crazy high, Westfield is growing but not at the rate CEG is asking we are a elderly couple moved to Westfield condo to down size and save money ! This rate hike isn't helping the elderly citizens that continue to move to Westfield.

Please try to bring it down that will work for everyone !

Concerned Westfield Citizens !

Mercy & Remo Mezzetta 172 Moose Court , Westfield , in 46074

Sent from Mail for Windows

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?	
COPY	Submission For: OUCC_Contact_2361 - 10/31/22 9:50 AM Mr.
Name:	Ken Hays
Email:	khays101@hotmail.com
Address:	16220 Morning Drive WESTFIELD, IN 46074
Telephone (Best number to reach you between	(317) 797-4110
8:00 am and 4:00 pm, Eastern Time, Monday through Friday)::	

indicate the cause number and/or name of utility::

Your Comments:: While I understand inflation results in companies needing to raise rates and pass costs on to customers, the whole energy sector should be an exception. Our country produces record amounts of natural gas and oil.... Energy companies are taking advantage of consumers by exporting a large amount at high prices caused by war, pandemic, whatever.... The point is why should the consumers continue to pay more while companies report record profits and stock buy backs, dividend increases, etc? Why aren't energy companies (and those providing services via energy use, like here) held responsible for costs and expenses?

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2	
Formstack Submissie COPY Submitted at 10/30/22	on For: OUCC_Contact_2361 - 2 4:09 PM
Title:	Mrs.
Name:	Elizabeth LePere
Email:	libbyesl@aol.com
Address:	16802 Oak Manor Drive Westfield, IN 46074
Telephone (Best number to reach you between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm, Eastern Time, Monday through Friday)::	(317) 985-1100
If providing comments on a specific case, please	Westfield citizens gas
indicate the cause number and/or name of utility::	

homeowners are struggling and I think an 18% increase in natural gas is exorbitant.

	ERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments o nown senders or unexpected email. ****
2	
COPY	Submission For: OUCC_Contact_2361 - 11/07/22 4:53 PM
Title:	
Name:	Nancy Wieringa
Email:	riseball@gmail.com
	573 Elnora Lane Westfield, IN 46074
Address:	

indicate the cause number and/or name of utility::	Citizens Gas of Westfield.
Your Comments::	I am writing in regard to the proposed rate for our gas bill. We disagree that our rate for natural gas should increase. If you, as a company has grown, then the money you are receiving from new customers should cover the cost of your system and the ability to maintain it. In the midst of inflation, we do not need our gas bills to increase by \$10 a month. We definitely would not be happy customers if you decide to raise our rate by 18%.

omission For: OUCC_Contact_2361 - /22/22 7:32 AM
Dr.
Anne Goodwin
stapled-net.0f@icloud.com
4225 Birkdale Blvd Carmel, IN 46033
(614) 530-8751
Westfield citizens gas proposed hike

Your Comments:: The increase in operating cost proposed is many times the rate if inflation and gas prices are dropping in general. This feels like a money grab rather than a need. They need to streamline rather than fleece their customers. Vote no.

	Sunday, Octob an EXTERN	
	2	
COPY	titted at 10/	omission For: OUCC_Contact_2361 - /30/22 11:18 AM Mrs.
Nam		Tracey Hiatt
Ema		tlh1081@msn.com
Addı	cess:	16657 Wanatah Trail Westfield, IN 46074
(Best to rea betw am a	day 1gh	(317) 698-0592
com a spe case, indic	oviding nents on ccific please ate the e number	Citizens

and/or name of utility::	
Your Comments::	I see citizens is trying to get a rate increase the amount of money people are being charged for gas and electric is outrageous. There are people that aren't going to be able to afford it if we keep raising the price. I already feel like both citizens and Duke are charging way too much. My electric and gas bills this year were way more than even last year. Thanks

From:	Stacy Routh
To:	UCC Consumer Info
Subject:	Stacy Routh-Increase- Citizens Gas of Westfield Cause No. 45761
Date:	Tuesday, November 1, 2022 5:30:58 PM

**** This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email. ****

This is ludicrous! The price increase is way too much how are families to live in Westfield of things like this keep driving people out. There is nothing encouraging people to move to the community only to sell and move out. I will be one of those Stacy routh

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

This is to certify that a copy of the foregoing has been served upon the following parties of

record in the captioned proceeding by electronic service on December 2, 2022.

Michael E. Allen Alejandro Valle Lauren Toppen **Citizens Energy Group** E-mail: mallen@citizensenergygroup.com avalle@citizensenergygroup.com

ltoppen@citizensenergygroup.com

Joseph M. Sutherland Vice President, Regulatory & External Affairs **Citizens Energy Group** Email: jsutherland@citizensenergygroup.com Steven W. Krohne Ice Miller LLP E-mail: steven.krohne@icemiller.com

Debi Bardhan-Akala Director, Regulatory Affairs **Citizens Energy Group** Email: dbardhan@citizensenergygroup.com

Afg M Rul

Jeffrey M. Reed Attorney No 11651-49 Deputy Consumer Counselor

INDIANA OFFICE OF UTILITY CONSUMER COUNSELOR 115 West Washington Street Suite 1500 South Indianapolis, IN 46204 <u>infomgt@oucc.in.gov</u> 317/232-2494 – Telephone

317/232-5923 – Facsimile