

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this panel today and thank Chairman Chatterjee, the Commissioners, and Commission staff for organizing this important technical conference regarding the impacts of COVID-19 on the energy industry.

I am Gary Gibson, General Manager - CEO for City Utilities of Springfield, and I appear on behalf of the American Public Gas Association or APGA. City Utilities of Springfield is a community-owned utility serving over 110,000 customers in southwest Missouri with natural gas, as well as electricity, water, broadband, and public transportation services. For the last 75 years, City Utilities has been governed by a board of dedicated local citizens.

APGA appreciates the Commission's commitment to addressing the significant impacts that COVID-19 has had on the energy industry. Throughout this crisis, approximately 1,000 communities across the U.S. have relied on their public gas utilities for safe, reliable, and affordable fuel for use in cooking, clothes drying, and space and water heating, as well as for various commercial and industrial needs. APGA's members have delivered.

APGA members are locally-owned and governed to be accountable to the communities they serve – community aid and service is the mandate for these utilities. Consequently, APGA's members, including City Utilities, have taken significant steps to ensure natural gas continues to safely flow to all during this crisis, especially to those with emergency financial needs. To best serve their communities, APGA's members have been pausing shutoffs, waiving fees and penalties for late payment, and restoring service to those in need. As a result, many APGA members have had customers request deferrals of payments, resulting in the deferral of hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenue for some systems.

Furthermore, APGA members and other pipeline operators have developed COVID-related procedures to ensure that personnel have the planning, resources, and technology they need to perform their roles and to minimize exposure to the virus. While enforcement of certain regulations has been relaxed to provide relief to regulated communities, pipeline safety has remained the top priority during these challenging times. Employees of APGA members have been on the front lines supporting their customer owners by responding to a variety of service calls.

Municipal gas utilities have also fallen victim to the hardships presented by the pandemic, having lost roughly \$140 million since March and being projected to realize additional revenue losses in the coming months. While Congress has acted swiftly to provide much needed aid to various industries, local governments including municipal utilities have been largely ineligible for many of these programs. Consequently, APGA has requested Congressional assistance to help offset revenue losses as a result of COVID-19. Until public utilities receive appropriate support, APGA's members will continue to face significant financial hardships, which could impact infrastructure projects moving forwards.

With these challenging times, there has been heightened awareness of many APGA members' dependence on one pipeline for gas supply. While no issues were experienced during the pandemic, the Commission is encouraged to ensure that it is taking appropriate steps in

approving infrastructure that allows for America's abundant energy resources to reach the homes and businesses that need them.

During this crisis, many of the best solutions have come at the local level – those closest to the needs of their communities. Public gas utilities continue to be essential to thousands of communities across the country, and we look forward to working together with the Commission and other stakeholders towards solutions that support these critical entities through responsible recovery. Thank you again, and I look forward to today's discussion.