

CURB News

News from the Watchdog for Residential and Small Commercial Utility Consumers

FIRST QUARTER 2026



THE CITIZENS' UTILITY RATEPAYER BOARD OF KANSAS

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Liberty Files Rate Case Application

KCC Docket No. [26-EPDE-0180-RTS](#)

On December 31, 2025, Liberty Utilities (Liberty) filed an application with the Kansas Corporation Commission (“KCC”) requesting approval of a rate increase. Liberty seeks to increase its total base rate revenue by \$15.8 million, or 93.77%. As part of the requested rate changes, the fixed monthly customer charge for residential customers would increase from \$14.25 to \$25.00. Based upon an average monthly usage of 1,000 kWh, a typical residential customer faces an average total monthly bill increase of \$54.45, or 40%.

According to Liberty, the company’s investments to modernize transmission and distribution infrastructure are the biggest driver of the increase in rates. These projects include a series of wind turbine generation projects. Liberty asserts that the wind projects will result in savings on the Energy Cost Adjustment surcharge, and therefore it is appropriate to recover associated costs from ratepayers. Liberty further points to other contributing factors such as post-COVID inflationary effects and depreciation expenses. Liberty proposes a rate of return of 7.43% with a 53% equity capital structure ratio.

While the application proposes an average total monthly residential bill increase of 40%, Liberty proposes to phase-in the rate increase over a three-year period to reduce the immediate bill impact on customers while gradually building up to the full amount. Residential customers using 1,000 kWh per month would see their average bill increase by \$11.88 in the first year, an additional \$21.28 in the second year, and an additional \$21.29 in the third year.

Written direct testimony from intervenors, like CURB, is due by May 6, 2026. A Commission order on the application is due August 28, 2026.

Public Hearing Info

A live public hearing for this docket will be held at 6:00 p.m. in Columbus, Kansas, on May 12th, 2026, at Columbus High School. Attendees may participate in person or virtually via Zoom. Individuals wishing to make a public comment during the hearing via Zoom must [register in advance](#) to receive login information. A live video stream and recording of the public hearing will be available on the [KCC's YouTube](#) channel.

For those who cannot attend the live public hearing, the KCC is also soliciting comments from the general public. The public comment period for this docket is open now through June 5th, 2026. Comments can be submitted to KCC Public Affairs via mail, email (kcc.public.affairs@ks.gov), phone (1.800.662.0027), or online (<https://kcc-connect.kcc.ks.gov/s/public-comments>).

Black Hills Files Abbreviated Rate Case Application

KCC Docket No. 26-BHCG-0240-RTS

On March 2, 2026, Black Hills Energy (“Black Hills”) filed an Abbreviated Rate Case Application with the KCC pursuant to the Commission Order in Docket 25-BHCG-298-RTS (“25-298”). According to the 25-298 Order, the abbreviated rate case application allows Black Hills to update plant-in-service balances through December 31, 2025, and to “true-up” construction work in progress amounts through September 30, 2025. This will result in a revenue increase of \$2,431,948.

As a result of the proposed updates, the monthly residential customer charge will increase from \$21.00 to \$21.70, and the monthly small commercial customer charge will increase from \$32.00 to \$33.07. Based upon an average monthly usage of 53.6 Therms per month, a typical residential customer faces an average monthly bill increase of \$1.25.

CURB is currently reviewing the application for compliance with Commission orders and for reasonableness of the increase. Recommendations from intervenors, like CURB, are due in May 2026. A Commission order on the application is due June 30, 2026.

KCC Approves Atmos Rate Settlement Agreement

KCC Docket No. 26-ATMG-026-RTS

On July 25, 2025, Atmos Energy Corporation (“Atmos”) filed an application with the KCC requesting approval of a rate increase for its natural gas operations in Kansas. Atmos initially requested an incremental revenue requirement increase of \$19,068,321, resulting in a proposed overall rate of return of 8.20%. Under Atmos’s original proposal, based upon an average monthly usage of 67.3 Ccf, a typical residential customer faced an average monthly bill increase of \$9.12 or 11.2%. However, the parties to the case agreed to a lower overall revenue requirement during settlement negotiations.

On February 26, 2026, the KCC approved a unanimous settlement agreement, increasing Atmos’s net revenue by \$12 million. The rate increase became effective on March 1. A typical residential customer will see an increase of approximately \$5.69 per month or 6.81%. A portion of the increase is attributable to an increase to the residential customer charge from \$19.75 per month to \$23.00 per month.

Kansas Gas Service Requests Renewable Natural Gas Supply Contract and Tariff

KCC Docket No. [26-KGSG-0163-CON](#)

On December 8, 2025, Kansas Gas Service (“KGS”) applied for approval of a gas supply agreement to establish a regulatory framework for the purchase, transportation, and distribution of renewable natural gas (also referred to as biogas or “RNG”). Specifically, KGS seeks to purchase RNG from Lewis Biofuels which is constructing several dairy farm biodigesters in Edwards County, Kansas. Biodigesters convert livestock manure into biogas which can be further processed for other end uses. If approved, the RNG Gas Supply Agreement would provide a new source of natural gas sufficient to meet the annual needs of approximately 7,000 of KGS’s residential customers.

The pricing details of the contract are not available to the public, but CURB is authorized to access this confidential information. CURB is currently reviewing KGS’s proposal. A commission decision on this matter is due by August 5, 2026.

Southern Pioneer Is Now Self-Regulated

Senate Bill [348](#)

Southern Pioneer is a not-for-profit subsidiary of Pioneer Electric Cooperative. As such, Southern Pioneer did not file typical rate cases before the KCC like regulated, investor-owned public utilities in Kansas do. Rather, Southern Pioneer would annually file an application to adjust rates to a level that would generate sufficient operating income to cover its debt obligations.

During the 2026 Kansas Legislative Session, Senate Bill (“SB”) 348 was proposed to exempt any not-for-profit wholly owned subsidiary of an electric cooperative public utility (i.e., Southern Pioneer) from the jurisdiction of the KCC, allowing them to self-regulate in a similar fashion as cooperative public utilities.

On March 12, 2026, the Governor approved SB 348 and it became effective on March 19, 2026. Southern Pioneer’s retail electric service is now self-regulated like other electric cooperative utilities. (SB 348 does not affect the Commission’s jurisdiction over Southern Pioneer’s 34.5kV wholesale Local Access Delivery Service.)

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We're on the Web!

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ABOUT THE CITIZENS' UTILITY RATEPAYER BOARD

Established in 1988, the Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board (CURB) is an agency focused on advocacy for residential and small commercial utility consumers in Kansas. The Board is composed of five (5) appointed volunteer members representing the four congressional districts in Kansas and one at-large member. CURB was initially founded by the Chairman of the Kansas Corporation Commission upon a perceived need for a stronger consumer advocate. CURB has evolved into an independent agency, currently employing a consumer counsel, three supporting attorneys, three analysts, and two administrative staff.

OUR MISSION: To zealously protect the interests of residential and small commercial utility ratepayers before the Kansas Corporation Commission and the Kansas legislature.

OUR VISION: To protect Kansas residential and small commercial utility ratepayers by promoting the delivery of optimal utility services—being safe, reliable and technically robust, environmentally sensible, cost-effective, and equitably provided to all Kansas utility consumers at just prices.

The Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board



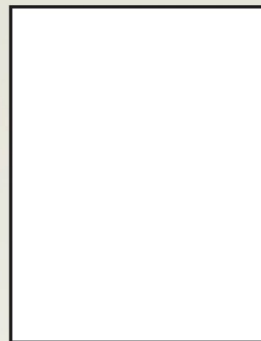
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