

ORDER NO. 87767

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION	*	BEFORE THE
OF SANDPIPER ENERGY, INC. FOR A	*	PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
GENERAL INCREASE IN ITS NATURAL	*	OF MARYLAND
GAS AND PROPOANE RATES AND FOR	*	_____
APPROVAL OF CERTAIN OTHER	*	
CHANGES TO ITS TARIFF	*	CASE NO. 9410
_____	*	_____

Issue Date: September 13, 2016

On December 2, 2015, Sandpiper Energy, Inc. (“Sandpiper” or “Company”) filed an application with the Maryland Public Service Commission (“Commission”) for authority to adjust its retail rates and charges for the distribution of propane and natural gas and for approval of certain changes to its tariff. By Order No. 87270, the Commission initiated this proceeding, delegated the proceedings to the Public Utility Law Judge Division, and suspended the proposed rates for an initial period of 150 days from January 1, 2016.

On January 8, 2016, a pre-hearing conference was held in this matter and a procedural schedule was adopted with which all parties¹ were in agreement. Subsequent to the pre-hearing conference and pursuant to further discussions between Sandpiper, the Commission’s Staff Counsel and Office of People’s Counsel (collectively, the “Parties”), the Parties agreed to extend the adopted procedural schedule an additional 30 days and to

¹ The Maryland Office of People’s Counsel and the Commission’s Technical Staff are the other parties in this proceeding.

reschedule certain procedural deadlines.² On February 4, 2016, in order to implement the revised procedural schedule, Sandpiper agreed to withdraw its request for a January 1, 2016 effective date for its proposed rates and charges included with its application and requested that its proposed rates and charges become effective February 1, 2016 for purposes of calculating a new suspension period to provide the Commission an opportunity to determine the justness and reasonableness of the rates and to allow sufficient time to address any appeals of a Proposed Order and issue a final Order in this matter.³ Pursuant to Public Utilities Article §4-204(b)(2), *Annotated Code of Maryland*, on February 11, 2016, the Commission issued Order No. 87397 that suspended the proposed rates filed by Sandpiper on December 2, 2015, for a period of not more than 180 days from February 1, 2016. On July 7, 2016, the Commission issued Order No. 87657 and further extended the suspension period an additional 60 days pursuant to Sandpiper's second extension request filed on June 30, 2016.⁴

On September 7, 2016, Sandpiper filed a third request for the Commission to extend the statutory suspension period an additional 37 days, or until November 4, 2016, to allow sufficient time for the parties and the Public Utility Law Judge to consider any comments provided during the upcoming scheduled September 20, 2016 Public Comment Hearing and to review the settlement arrived at between the Parties. In order to implement the requested extension, Sandpiper agrees to withdraw its April 1, 2016

² See ML 183053. The Parties submitted the revised procedural schedule to the Public Utility Law Judge for approval. On February 10, 2016, Public Utility Law Judge McGowan approved the revised schedule and issued a Notice of Modified Procedural Schedule in this proceeding.

³ *Id.*

⁴ See ML 194208.

proposed effective date for its proposed tariffs and rates and now requests that its proposed tariff rates and charges become effective on May 9, 2016.

IT IS THEREFORE, this 13th day of September, in the year Two Thousand Sixteen by the Public Service Commission of Maryland,

ORDERED: (1) That the proposed rates filed by Sandpiper Energy, Inc. on December 2, 2015 are hereby suspended for 180 days from May 9, 2016.

By Direction of the Commission,

/s/ David J. Collins

David J. Collins
Executive Secretary