

Decision _____

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Wilson HOA Management Solutions,

Complainant,

vs.

San Diego Gas & Electric Company (U902E),

Defendant.

(ECP)
Case 12-09-015
(Filed September 26, 2012)

Linda Boisvart, and Thomas Wilson for Wilson HOA, Complainant.
Aurora Carillo, for San Diego Gas & Electric Company, Defendant.

DECISION DENYING RELIEF**1. Summary**

Complainant, Wilson HOA Management Solutions (HOA), seeks to have Defendant, San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E), change its smart meter service turn-on policy for any new resident of the Gaslamp City Square building. In its complaint, HOA requests that the Commission require SDG&E to set appointments with new residents to provide access to the building's meter rooms to activate the service. The request for relief is denied, as discussed below.

2. Positions of the Parties

HOA objects to the SDG&E turn-on policy because it requires that HOA provide access to the meter room for new tenants to activate service to their individual units. HOA's primary argument is that it does not have the staff to provide residents access to the meter rooms, and that it is SDG&E's

responsibility as the utility providing service to the building. HOA further asserts that residents experience delays or no-shows when they make appointments with SDG&E for service technicians to come out and assist with meter room access and smart meter turn on. HOA also claims that SDG&E's new smart meter turn-on policy poses a risk of fire because it no longer requires that a legal age resident be present during meter turn-on.

SDG&E states that the new smart meter turn-on policy is essentially the same as the old analog meter turn-on policy. For safety reasons, SDG&E remotely activates the power to the meter, but power to the residential unit is activated manually by flipping the meter's breaker to the "on" position and pushing the reset button. SDG&E states that the practice is designed to minimize the risk of fire caused by power coming on in an unoccupied or minor-only occupied residence when there is the chance that a stove, oven or iron has been left on. A hearing was held in San Diego on November 2, 2012. At the hearing SDG&E stated that its initial instruction to new customers is that they will receive an automated call telling them that their service request has been completed and they may activate their service by flipping the main breaker and pushing the reset button. SDG&E stated that if a customer calls back and claims an inability or unwillingness to flip the breaker or push the reset button, SDG&E will set an appointment for a service technician to meet the resident on site and activate the power to the residence. SDG&E asked HOA for information regarding the missed appointments, but HOA had no information readily available. SDG&E provided HOA with a customer service supervisor's number to call if there is a missed appointment.

SDG&E claims the current turn-on practice promotes safety, is efficient and cost effective, and also allows customers to set their own a schedule

regarding time of activation. Also at the hearing, SDG&E stated that it does not require that meters be housed in locked rooms, therefore, if the locks were removed residents could access their meters without HOA's assistance. HOA stated that it wants the meter rooms locked because it fears that if the meter rooms are left unlocked residents may use them for storage, discarded items, garbage or for unsavory or illegal activities.

In its answer to the complaint and at the hearing, SDG&E provided possible solutions for residents to be provided access to the meter rooms or for service activation without access to the meter rooms. SDG&E suggested that since HOA schedules move-in dates and hires private security to oversee the moves, HOA or the private security personnel could also provide access to the meter rooms on move-in days. Alternatively, SDG&E suggested that rental unit owners use the revert-to-owner program. The revert-to-owner program places the billing in the unit owner's name when a unit is vacated. When a new tenant moves in, the new tenant merely calls SDG&E to have service put in the tenant's name. There is no need to access the meter rooms because service is never interrupted. Another SDG&E-suggested alternative is to provide multi-use keycards for access to all common areas such as the gym, pool, laundry and meter rooms. HOA stated that these alternatives were either inconvenient or costly.

3. Discussion

HOA has failed to prove that SDG&E's turn-on policy violates any tariff rule or regulation. Cal. Pub. Util. Code §451 requires that every Public Utility shall furnish and maintain such adequate, efficient, just, and reasonable service, instrumentalities, equipment, and facilities, including telephone facilities, as defined in Section 54.1 of the Civil Code, as are necessary to promote the safety,

health, comfort, and convenience of its patrons, employees, and the public. SDG&E's turn-on process promotes safety by reducing the risk of fire, reduces utility operating costs and ultimately lowers utility bills, and provides a convenient way for customers to control their service activation schedule. Therefore, we find SDG&E's turn-on policy consistent with Pub. Util. Code §451 requirements of promoting the safety, health, comfort and convenience of its customers.

We also agree that SDG&E's various alternatives provide adequate options for residents' meter room access that minimizes customer inconvenience, yet promotes safety. We are also satisfied that SDG&E has demonstrated its commitment to investigate any complaints of delay or missed appointments. For the above reasons, we deny HOA's request for relief.

4. Assignment of Proceeding

Mark J. Ferron is the assigned Commissioner and Linda Rochester is the assigned Administrative Law Judge in this proceeding.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The relief requested by Wilson HOA Management Solutions is denied.
2. Case 12-09-015 is dismissed.
3. Case 12-09-015 is closed.

This order is effective today.

Dated _____, at San Francisco, California.