

ALJ/JYL/nd3 6/4/2025



**FILED**

06/04/25

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A2409001

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Application of Southwest Gas Corporation (U905G) for Authority to Increase Rates and Charges for Gas Service in California, Effective January 1, 2026.

Application 24-09-001

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE'S RULING  
UPDATING PROCEEDING SCHEDULE**

This ruling updates the schedule for the remainder of this proceeding and grants the Public Advocates Office at the California Public Utilities Commission (Cal Advocates) and Small Business Utility Advocates' (SBUA) joint motion for a continuance of the June 10, 2025 evidentiary hearing deadline.

**1. Background**

On September 6, 2024, Southwest Gas Corporation (Southwest Gas) filed Application 24-09-001, seeking authority to increase rates and charges for gas service in California, effective January 1, 2026. The California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) preliminarily determined that this is a ratesetting proceeding in Resolution ALJ-176, published September 27, 2024. On October 14, 2024, Cal Advocates filed a protest.

The Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) held a prehearing conference (PHC) on December 11, 2024, to address the issues of law and fact, determine the need for hearing, set the schedule for resolving the matter, and address other matters as necessary. Southwest Gas filed a Joint Prehearing Conference Statement on

behalf of the parties to address those issues. At that PHC, Southwest Gas indicated that it would file an amendment to the application.

On December 15, 2024, Southwest Gas filed a motion seeking authority to establish a General Rate Case Memorandum Account (GRCMA), effective January 1, 2026. No opposition to that motion was filed.

On December 20, 2024, Southwest Gas filed a timely amendment to the application that reflected corrections of purported errors in the original application that affected Southwest Gas' Results of Operations models and Class Cost of Service Study/Rate Design models.

SBUA filed a motion for party status on January 10, 2025. The ALJ granted that motion on January 14, 2025.

After considering the application, Cal Advocates' protest, the parties' Joint Prehearing Conference Statement, Southwest Gas' motion seeking authority to establish a GRCMA, the amendment to the application, and discussion at the PHC, assigned Commissioner Matthew Baker determined the issues and initial schedule of the proceeding as set forth in a January 22, 2025 Scoping Memo and Ruling (Scoping Memo).

That Scoping Memo directed the parties to serve and file no later than May 23, 2025, a Status Report on Settlement Discussions. Southwest Gas and Cal Advocates filed a report stating that many of the outstanding issues in this proceeding were resolved between them. Those two parties reported that they continue working toward settlement of all issues and anticipate additional settlement discussions prior to an evidentiary hearing, should a hearing be needed. SBUA did not participate in those settlement discussions.

## **2. Status Conference**

In a May 19, 2025 ALJ ruling, all parties were ordered to meet and confer and Southwest Gas was directed to prepare, file, and serve a Joint Status Conference Statement on or by May 27, 2025, on behalf of all parties that presented each party's respective position regarding matters relevant to the status, management, and disposition of this proceeding. However, the Commission received two separate status conference statements. Southwest Gas filed a Joint Status Conference Statement presenting the positions of itself and Cal Advocates. SBUA filed a Separate Status Conference Statement indicating that Southwest Gas did not confer with SBUA.

On May 30, 2025, all parties participated in a telephonic status conference. The purpose of the status conference was to ascertain whether, pursuant to Rule 13.8(c) of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (Rules), all parties stipulated to the receipt of prepared testimony into evidence without direct or cross examination, any other need to convene an evidentiary hearing, and the parties' resources and readiness for an evidentiary hearing, including estimates of time requested for witness cross-examination and identification of anticipated final exhibits. This status conference also provided an opportunity for all parties to raise other matters relevant to this proceeding with the assigned ALJ.

At the status conference, the parties confirmed their positions presented in their Status Conference Statements, including the following.

First, all parties reported that each will stipulate to the receipt of prepared testimony — and associated exhibits — into the record without direct examination. However, Southwest Gas and Cal Advocates reserve the right to cross-examine witnesses. In its separate statement, SBUA anticipates scoped

issues 1-3, 9, 12, and 15 will require only legal briefing but will participate in any evidentiary hearing in this proceeding.

Second, at this point in the proceeding, the parties appear to agree that an evidentiary hearing may not be needed. Southwest Gas and Cal Advocates indicated that productive settlement discussions are ongoing between them and suggested that all or some additional issues may be resolved without the need for an evidentiary hearing. SBUA did not propose an evidentiary hearing and anticipates that a hearing may be avoided by negotiated stipulations among the parties. SBUA has not been engaged in settlement discussions to date but will join those discussions henceforth.

In light of the parties' respective positions, it is premature to commence an evidentiary hearing while Southwest Gas and Cal Advocates are engaged in reportedly productive settlement discussions that will be joined by SBUA going forward. Therefore, we postpone the determination on whether there is a need to convene an evidentiary hearing until after a second Status Conference to allow (1) SBUA to participate in the ongoing settlement discussions, and (2) the parties to further narrow and/or resolve issues in dispute.

Third, the parties presented their respective positions regarding the proceeding schedule. The statutory deadline to complete this proceeding is March 6, 2026. The Scoping Memo identified May 30, 2025, as the deadline to exchange hearing materials and motions *in limine*, and June 10, 2025 as the latest date to commence an in-person Evidentiary Hearing. The ALJ ruled from the bench at the May 30, 2025 Status Conference, vacating the May 30, 2025 deadline to exchange evidentiary hearing materials and motions *in limine*.

The May 19, 2025 ALJ ruling directed all parties to identify their availabilities for an evidentiary hearing in June, July, and August 2025.

Southwest Gas requested that we maintain June 10, 2025, citing its staff's reliance on the proceeding schedule identified in the Scoping Memo and did not identify alternative dates of availability during June, July, or August 2025. Cal Advocates reported general availability to participate in an evidentiary hearing no sooner than June 30, 2025, and indicated that date as providing sufficient time for the continued settlement discussions with Southwest Gas that SBUA will now join. SBUA identified its availability generally in June, July, and August 2025.

On June 3, 2025, Cal Advocates and SBUA jointly moved to continue the evidentiary hearing to a date no sooner than June 30, 2025, to (1) allow sufficient time for ongoing settlement discussions to take place, and (2) enable SBUA to participate in those settlement discussions. Southwest Gas opposed that motion on the grounds that the company's staff planned summer schedules around the schedule provided in the Scoping Memo.

### **3. Updated Proceeding Schedule**

After considering the parties' Status Conference Statements, discussion at the status conference, Cal Advocates and SBUA's joint motion to continue the evidentiary hearing to a date after June 30, 2025, and Southwest Gas' opposition, Cal Advocates and SBUA's joint motion is granted.

The proceeding schedule is updated as set forth below to promote the full, fair, just, and efficient participation by all parties.

<b>EVENT</b>	<b>DATE</b>
Close of Discovery	By Agreement of the Parties
All-Party Settlement Discussions	Ongoing
Second Joint Status Conference Report (to be served and filed by Applicant on behalf of all parties)	No later than July 3, 2025
Second Status Conference (Remote)	July 9, 2025

EVENT	DATE
All parties' final evidentiary hearing materials served on parties and the ALJ by Applicant ( <i>i.e.</i> , Joint Witness List, Joint Exhibit List, Joint Statement of Stipulated and Disputed Material Facts, pre-marked hearing exhibits, other materials as ordered by the ALJ) (served by email)  All motions <i>in limine</i> (served and filed)	No later than July 16, 2025
All responses to motions <i>in limine</i> (served and filed)	No later than July 23, 2025
Evidentiary Hearing (In-Person)  California Public Utilities Commission Hearing Room A 505 Van Ness Avenue San Francisco, CA 94102	To commence no later than July 30, 2025
Concurrent Opening briefs	No later than August 22, 2025
Concurrent Reply briefs [ <i>matter submitted</i> ]	No later than September 5, 2025

Southwest Gas must meet and confer with all parties and then serve and file by the deadline above, on behalf of all parties, an updated Second Joint Status Conference Report in response to the May 20, 2025 ALJ Ruling.

The purpose of the Second Status Conference above is to ascertain whether, pursuant to Rule 13.8(c), the parties stipulate to the receipt of prepared testimony into evidence without direct or cross examination or other need to convene an evidentiary hearing or, in the alternative, the parties' resources, readiness and needs for the effective conduct of the evidentiary hearing, including estimates of time requested for cross-examination and identification of anticipated exhibits.

The proceeding will stand submitted upon the filing of reply briefs, unless the ALJ requires further evidence or argument. Based on this schedule, the proceeding will be resolved within 18 months as required by Public Utilities Code Section 1701.5.

The proceeding schedule above may be modified by the ALJ as required to promote the efficient and fair resolution of this proceeding.

A party may seek modification of the proceeding schedule above for good cause.

**IT IS SO RULED.**

Dated June 4, 2025, at San Francisco, California.

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/s/ JEFFREY LEE  
Jeffrey Lee  
Administrative Law Judge