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Mr. David Collins
Executive Secretary
Maryland Public Service Commission
6 Saint Paul St., 16th floor
Baltimore, MD 21202

Ref: #28, 7/6/11 AM; ML #126119, 129548, 131642, and 132242, TG-73
Columbia Gas Retail Choice Program
Request for Reconsideration and Rehearing

Dear Mr. Collins:

It was with significant disappointment that the City of Hagerstown's Wastewater Treatment Plant learned that our ability to choose a retail natural gas supplier has been terminated, and that we have no choice but to pay the rates charged by Columbia Gas of Maryland. We just became aware of this situation, having received no notice that an end to retail choice was pending.

The Public Service Commission's decision to end retail choice in the Columbia Gas of Maryland service territory has a significant impact on the City of Hagerstown's Wastewater Treatment Plant. First, it means that the prices we have been negotiating with competitive retail natural gas suppliers – at rates lower than Columbia Gas's – will not come to be. The significant savings we have been planning on have disappeared. Second, the time and resources devoted to making a smart choice with regard to our energy needs has been wasted. Future cost allocations per our Operating Budget will undoubtedly increase, directly impacting our entire customer base of approximately 58,000 users.

We therefore strongly believe that the Commission should not terminate our right to choose our natural gas supplier. We should have the ability to negotiate for better service, better products, and better prices. Additionally, we find it wholly unjust that such a decision was made with no notice. Accordingly, the City of Hagerstown's Wastewater Treatment Plant requests that the Commission reconsider and reverse its decision to end natural gas choice in the Columbia Gas of Maryland service territory, and provide opportunities for customers like the City of Hagerstown's Wastewater Treatment Plant to have a say in the decision.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael S. Spiker
Director of Utilities
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