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Audrey Zibelman, Chair

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**16046/15-G-0382**

## **New Three-Year Rate Plan for St. Lawrence Gas Company — Freezes Delivery Costs & Surcharges in First Year —**

**ALBANY** — The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today adopted a new, three-year rate plan for St. Lawrence Gas Co., freezing customer rates and surcharges in the first year with increases scheduled for 2018 and 2019 that are significantly below the rates originally requested by the company.

“The new rate plan is a win-win for customers because it freezes rates for the first year, and lowers the rate from what the company initially sought,” said Commission Chair Audrey Zibelman. “The agreement will provide the company with sufficient revenues for it to supply safe and adequate service at just and reasonable rates.”

Effective June 1, 2016 through May 31, 2019, the three-year plan calls for rate increases of zero, 1.04 percent and 1.03 percent, respectively; compared with the company’s original proposal for an 11.3 percent increase for an average annual residential customer bill for non-heating customers and a 3.3 increase for heating customers. The new plan will freeze rates for the first year for the typical residential heating customer using on average 1085 therms per year, and will result in an average monthly increase of \$1.25 in the second year and \$1.33 in the third year.

The new rate plan also includes:

- A new, five-year safety and reliability surcharge to recover less than one-quarter of the \$1.07 million in estimated costs for gas line inspections;
- Customer service standards will be increased, along with a new effort to reduce customer terminations;
- An increase in the company’s assistance program for low-income customers. The annual funding level of \$283,920 will more than double in order to serve nearly 3,000 customers, an increase of 400 customers. While the low-income program will continue to provide a \$5 monthly discount for recipients of a regular Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) grant, it will now provide a \$10 monthly discount to HEAP recipients with either an elderly or disabled individual or child under six years old in the household, or have an income level less than 130 percent of the federal poverty level.

St. Lawrence provides gas service to approximately 16,000 customers in the counties of St. Lawrence and Lewis. It is also in the process of expanding gas service into Franklin County. Approximately 90 percent of the company’s customers are residential.

Today's decision may be obtained by going to the Commission Documents section of the Commission's Web site at [www.dps.ny.gov](http://www.dps.ny.gov) and entering Case Number 15-G-0382 in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number". Many libraries offer free Internet access. Commission documents may also be obtained from the Commission's Files Office, 14th floor, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223 (518-474-2500). If you have difficulty understanding English, please call us at 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this press release.