BEFORE THE CORPORATION COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

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IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF SUMMIT UTILITIES OKLAHOMA, INC. FOR THE APPROVAL OF ITS PERFORMANCE-BASED RATE CHANGE PLAN CALCULATIONS FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2021

CAUSE NO. PUD 202200022



COURT CLERK'S OFFICE - OKC CORPORATION COMMISSION OF OKLAHOMA

DIRECT TESTIMONY AND EXHIBITS

OF

TYSON D. PORTER

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF REGULATORY FINANCE & RATES

ON BEHALF OF

SUMMIT UTILITIES OKLAHOMA, INC.

Filed March 15, 2022

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DIRECT EXHIBIT TDP-1

Calculation of TCJA EDIT Credits

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

My name is Tyson D. Porter. I am the Senior Director of Regulatory Finance and Rates for Summit Utilities, Inc. ("Summit"), testifying on behalf of Summit Utilities Oklahoma, Inc. ("SUO" or the "Company"). I have filed testimony before the Colorado Public Utilities Commission, Missouri Public Service Commission, and the Maine Public Utilities Commission as a cost of service witness and as an expert in cost of gas proceedings.

I provide an overview of the Performance Based Rate Change ("PBRC") Plan and discuss how the PBRC Plan is working as intended by encouraging greater efficiency and performance by SUO, reducing the cost of serving customers through significantly lower regulatory and rate case expenses, accomplishing "gradualism" by providing the opportunity for smaller, but more frequent rate changes, and resulting in closer supervision of the Company because of the required annual reviews of its financial results and operations.

In my testimony, I explain changes to the reclassification of Excess Deferred Income Tax ("EDIT") pursuant to PLR 202033002, issued by the Internal Revenue Service. The Company reclassified \$3,317,394 of Cost of Removal ("COR") ("EDIT") from the net unprotected liability to an unprotected asset, refund the 2021 final year remaining balance of \$215,957, which results in a net unprotected asset balance of \$3,101,437. The Company proposes to fully amortize the unprotected asset for approximately 13 years.

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Pursuant to the Commission's Interim Order in Cause No. PUD 202000050, the Company created a regulatory asset and recorded an estimate of \$238,122 in incurred bad debt and other incurred eligible cost increases. This regulatory asset is not included in the Company's PBRC Plan calculations. The Company is neither requesting recovery of this asset nor carrying costs on this asset at this time.

Pursuant to the Commission's Order in Cause No. PUD 202100114, the Company proposes to complete a Depreciation Study and Cost of Service Study in calendar year 2023 and file both studies in the 2024 PBRC.

I recommend the Commission approve:

- 1. The reclassification of EDIT resulting in amortization of the unprotected asset of \$3,101,437; and
- The timeline to complete and file the Cost of Service Study and Depreciation Study

1		I. <u>INTRODUCTION</u>
2	Q.	PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME AND BUSINESS ADDRESS.
3	А.	Tyson D. Porter, 10825 Geddes Avenue, Suite 410, Centennial, Colorado 80112.
4	Q.	ON WHOSE BEHALF IS YOUR TESTIMONY PRESENTED?
5	А.	I am testifying on behalf of Summit Utilities Oklahoma, Inc. ("SUO" or the
6		"Company").
7	Q.	BY WHOM AND IN WHAT CAPACITY ARE YOU EMPLOYED?
8	А.	I am employed by Summit Utilities, Inc. ("Summit"), the parent company of SUO,
9		as the Senior Director of Regulatory Finance and Rates. My duties as Senior
10		Director of Regulatory Finance and Rates include preparing cost of service studies
11		and developing accounting exhibits and testimony for use in applications for rate
12		changes for Summit's subsidiaries. I prepare or assist in preparing regularly filed
13		exhibits and reports to various regulatory commissions. I also provide data, answer
14		inquiries, and assist representatives of the regulatory commissions in connection
15		with their audits and reviews.
16	Q.	PLEASE STATE YOUR EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND
17		RELEVANT BUSINESS EXPERIENCE.
18	A.	After earning dual Bachelor of Science degrees in Business Administration and
19		Accounting from the University of Kansas in 2006, I started my career as an auditor
20		for EKS&H, a large Colorado-based accounting and business consulting firm, now
21		Plant Moran. I was accountable for planning and conducting audits on public and
22		private organizations, primarily in the energy sector, including gas utilities. In
23		2010, I left EKS&H to become a consultant to Southern Missouri Gas L.P., a gas
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1		utility serving customers in central and southern Missouri. In 2012, a subsidiary of
2		Summit, Summit Natural Gas of Missouri, Inc. (then known as Missouri Gas
3		Utility, Inc.), purchased all the assets of Southern Missouri Gas L.P. Following
4		completion of the integration, I accepted a position with Summit as a Regulatory
5		Analyst. In 2019, I accepted the role to be the Director of Regulatory Finance and
6		Rates and in 2022 was promoted to my current position as a Senior Director of
7		Regulatory Finance and Rates.
8	Q.	HAVE YOU TESTIFIED BEFORE OTHER REGULATORY BODIES?
9	A.	Yes, I have filed testimony before the Oklahoma Corporation Commission,
10		Colorado Public Utilities Commission, Missouri Public Service Commission, and
11		the Maine Public Utilities Commission as a cost of service witness and as an expert
12		in cost of gas proceedings.
13		II. <u>PURPOSE OF TESTIMONY</u>
14	Q.	PLEASE DISCUSS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TESTIMONY.
15	A.	The purpose of my testimony is to:
16		1) provide an overview of the Performance Based Rate Change ("PBRC")
17		Plan;
18		2) discuss how the PBRC Plan provides benefits to both customers and the
19		Company and is working as intended;
20		3) present the changes to Excess Deferred Income Tax (EDIT);
21		4) provide an overview of the COVID-19 Regulatory Asset;

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1		5) provide a proposed timeline for the Cost-of-Service Study and
2		Depreciation Study.
3		In addition, I sponsor Direct Exhibit TDP-1 - Calculation of TCJA EDIT Credits.
4		III. <u>PBRC PLAN BACKGROUND</u>
5	Q.	WHICH PROCEEDING GAVE RISE TO THE PBRC PLAN?
6	A.	Rider Schedule No. 5 PBRC Plan was approved by the Commission in Cause No.
7		PUD 200400187 and was the result of a Commission-approved settlement among
8		the parties to that Cause. The PBRC Plan was made a permanent feature of the
9		tariff until further order by the Commission by Final Order No. 576698
10		in Cause No. 201000030.
11		Rider Schedule No. 5 PBRC Plan was modified in various respects by Order
12		No. 528372 issued August 14, 2006, in Cause No. PUD 200600062, by Order No.
13		541049 issued on June 27, 2007, in Cause No. PUD 200700076, by Order No.
14		556393 issued July 8, 2008, in Cause No. PUD 200800062, by Order No. 576698
15		issued on July 7, 2010, in Cause No. PUD 201000030, by Order No. 583869 issued
16		March 25, 2011, in Cause No. PUD 201000148, by Order No. 588757 issued
17		August 31, 2011, in Cause No. PUD 201100056, by Order No. 598447 issued on
18		June 6, 2012, in Cause No. PUD 201200036, by Order No. 614541 issued on
19		August 6, 2013, in Cause No. PUD 201300033, by Order No. 625254 issued on
20		May 23, 2014, in Cause No. PUD 201400005, by Order No. 627433 issued on July
21		3, 2014, in Cause No. PUD 201400070, by Order No. 654461 issued on July 19,
22		2016, in Cause No. PUD 201600094, by Order No. 657250 issued on October 26,
23		2016, in Cause No. 201600263, by Order No. 684379 issued on October 4, 2018, Porter – Direct, Page 3

1		in Cause No. PUD 201800029, by Order No. 701439 issued on August 29, 2019,
2		in Cause No. PUD 201900019, by Order No. 713127 issued on July 14, 2020, in
3		Cause No. PUD 202000028, and by Order No. 720135 issued on August 19, 2021,
4		in Cause No. PUD 202100054.
5	Q.	HAVE UPDATES BEEN MADE TO RIDER SCHEDULE NO. 5 PRBC
6		PLAN SINCE THE LAST FILING IN CAUSE NO. PUD 202100054?
7	А.	Yes. The Commission approved the Joint Application of CenterPoint Energy
8		Resources Corp. ("CERC"), Southern Col Midco, LLC ("SC MidCo"), and SUO,
9		for the transfer of jurisdictional utility assets and customer accounts according to
10		OAC 165:45-3-5. As a result of this transfer, SUO was formed for the purpose of
11		acquiring the natural gas distribution assets of CERC and the applicable tariffs were
12		transferred to SUO, including Rider Schedule No. 5 PBRC Plan, in the
13		Commission's Final Order No. 721657 in Cause No. PUD 202100114.1 An
14		overview of the status of the asset sale transaction is discussed further in Company
15		witness Steven E. Birchfield's testimony.
16		IV. <u>PBRC PLAN IS WORKING AS INTENDED</u>
17	Q.	IS THE PBRC PLAN WORKING AS INTENDED, PROVIDING BENEFITS
18		TO BOTH CUSTOMERS AND THE COMPANY?
19	A.	Yes. As discussed below, the PBRC Plan continues to provide benefits to both the
20		Company and its customers resulting in the continued alignment of interests

¹ Cause No. PUD 202100114, Final Order No. 721657 at 3.

1		between customers, the Company, and shareholders. The PBRC Plan is working
2		as intended by:
3		1) encouraging greater efficiency and performance by SUO;
4		2) reducing the cost of serving customers through significantly lower rate
5		case and regulatory expenses;
6		3) accomplishing "gradualism" by providing the opportunity for more
7		frequent, but smaller, changes in rates;
8		4) providing closer supervision of SUO because of the annual review of its
9		financial performance by the Commission, the Staff of the Public Utility
10		Division ("PUD"), and the Office of the Attorney General of Oklahoma
11		("OAG"); and
12		5) aligning the interests of the Company, its shareholders, and its
13		customers due to SUO's unique combination among Oklahoma utilities
14		of the PBRC Plan and its Asset Management Agreement ("AMA").
15	Q.	HOW DOES THE PBRC PLAN ENCOURAGE GREATER EFFICIENCY
16		AND PERFORMANCE BY SUMMIT OKLAHOMA?
17	A.	The PBRC Plan encourages greater efficiency and performance by the Company
18		primarily in two ways. First, integral to the PBRC Plan is that it is performance-
19		based. If the Company does well, then both the Company and its customers benefit.
20		Per the PBRC Plan, if the Company's Earned Return on Equity ("ER") falls within
21		plus or minus 50 basis points of its Allowed Return on Equity ("AR") of 10.00%,
22		then no change in revenues will be authorized. This ROE dead-band moderates
23		rate changes as the ER fluctuates from year to year by degrees that are not Porter – Direct, Page \mid 5

significant. If the Company's ER is above the upper limit of the ROE dead-band,
then those earnings above that upper limit will be shared between the Company and
its customers, with the Company receiving 25% and its customers 75% of those
earnings. The Company thus has a financial incentive encouraging efficiency and
performance and customers receive a significant share of the benefit. Through the
2020 Test-Year (PUD No. 202100054), the PBRC refunds provided to customers
totaled \$7.75 million.

8 Second, this performance-based comparison occurs every year under the 9 PBRC Plan. This regular annual nature of the PBRC Plan is inherently an efficient 10 regulatory process for gas utilities like SUO. The Company's revenues, expenses, 11 investments, and activities are reviewed every single year by PUD, OAG, and 12 ultimately by the Commission. In its annual review, the PUD gains close familiarity with the Company's performance and can consistently, regularly, and 13 carefully track and review costs and revenues, easily identify financial, 14 15 performance, and policy changes from year to year, and focus a scope of review to 16 identify particular areas that need special attention. This annual review ensures the 17 level of revenues, expenses, investment and the activities of the Company are 18 necessary, reasonable, and in the public interest.

19 Q. DID THE COMMISSION ALREADY DETERMINE THAT IT IS

20

APPROPRIATE FOR SUMMIT OKLAHOMA TO CONTINUE THE USE

21 OF CERC'S PBRC PLAN FOR THIS PBRC FILING?

A. Yes. In Order No. 721657 of Cause No. PUD 202100114 the Commission adopted
 the Administrative Law Judge's ("ALJ") report, which found in Paragraph 20 that
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1 "prior consideration of this issue found that 'the yearly performance-based 2 comparison and regular review by PUD, OAG and ultimately the Commission is inherently efficient leading to improvements toward greater efficiency in the public 3 interest.""² Rejecting the OAG's contention that the PBRC should be suspended for 4 5 a number of years following the close of the asset sale, the ALJ further found in 6 Paragraph 18 that "PBRC suspension runs counter to the public interest as it would 7 eliminate the process which allows PUD to closely monitor utility costs during the transition period and thereafter on a yearly basis."³ 8

9 Q. DID CERC REQUEST APPROVAL FOR A NEW AMA IN CAUSE NO. PUD 10 202000105?

11 А Yes. CERC filed an application for approval of a new three-year AMA with 12 Tenaska Marketing Ventures/Tenaska Gas Storage, LLC ("Tenaska") and revenuesharing mechanism on November 4, 2020, to be effective from April 1, 2021 13 through March 31, 2024. The Commission approved CenterPoint Oklahoma's new 14 15 AMA in that Cause in Order No. 716903 on February 11, 2021. In Order No. 16 716903, the Commission found that the new AMA will provide specific and direct 17 benefits to customers. The specific and direct benefits include: "(1) lower rates 18 because of the removal of gas-in-storage from rate base; (2) guaranteed revenue 19 shared equally with customers; (3) continued benefit of the Company's skills in

² Cause No. PUD 202100114, Final Order No. 721657, at 6 (September 17, 2021).

³ Citing Cause No. PUD 201900019, Order No. 701439.

purchasing gas at the lowest available costs; and (4) no adverse effect on reliability
 of service to the Company's customers."⁴

3 Q. DID CERC ASSIGN ITS TENASKA AMA TO SUMMIT OKLAHOMA?

A. Yes. As of the date of the close of the transaction, the Tenaska AMA was assigned
to Summit Oklahoma and retained its expiration date of March 31, 2024. That
AMA in combination with the PBRC Plan saves the Company's customers
significant dollars annually. Company witness Burl M. Drews discusses the AMA
savings achieved for customers during the test period.

9 Q. WILL YOU PLEASE SUMMARIZE HOW THE PBRC PLAN IS 10 WORKING AS INTENDED?

11 Yes. The PBRC Plan will continue to work as intended by encouraging greater A. 12 efficiency and performance by the Company because of the revenue sharing for amounts earned above the upper level of the ROE dead-band. The Company 13 14 continues to obtain off-system revenue and find cost efficiencies to benefit 15 customers. The Company's financial performance is fully reviewed by the PUD, 16 the OAG, and the Commission every year. The interests of the Company, its 17 shareholders, and its customers remain substantially aligned due to the unique 18 combination of the PBRC Plan and the Company's AMA.

⁴ Cause No. PUD 202000105, Order No. 716903 at 3-4, (February 8, 2021).

1		V. EXCESS DEFERRED INCOME TAX
2	Q.	HAS THERE BEEN ANY CHANGE TO THE CLASSIFICATION OF EDIT
3		AMOUNTS SINCE THE LAST PBRC FILING?
4	А.	Yes. On August 15, 2020, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued PLR
5		202033002, in which it addressed whether Cost of Removal (COR) is "protected"
6		by the normalization rules of section $168(i)(9)$. It ruled that the EDIT resulting from
7		COR is not subject to normalization rules of section 168(i)(9) and should be
8		classified as unprotected.
9	Q.	DID CERC ORIGINALLY TREAT REMOVAL COSTS AS PROTECTED
10		OR UNPROTECTED WHEN REVALUING ADIT RESULTING FROM
11		THE TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT RATE CHANGE?
12	A.	CERC treated removal costs as protected under the normalization rules and
13		included the associated excess deferred taxes in the protected EDIT balance that
14		was reported. At the time, there was no clear guidance from the IRS on the
15		treatment of COR.
16	Q.	DID THE ISSUANCE OF THE PLR BY THE IRS REQUIRE SUO TO
17		RECLASS AMOUNTS ASSOCIATED WITH COR?
18	A.	Yes. In accordance with this guidance from the IRS, the Company reclassed
19		\$3,317,394 from the net protected liability to an unprotected asset.
20	Q.	HOW HAS THE COMPANY BEEN REFUNDING EDIT THAT RESULTED
21		FROM THE TAX CUTS JOBS ACT OF 2017?
22	A.	In Cause No. PUD 201800029, Order No. 684379, the Company agreed to refund
23		the then unprotected liability over a period of 5 years. The protected EDIT is being

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1		amortized and returned to customers in accordance with the average rate
2		assumption method ("ARAM"). ⁵ Every April, the Company issues a one-time bill
3		credit for the net refund associated with the amortization of EDIT.
4	Q.	WAS 2021 THE FINAL YEAR FOR AMORTIZING THE UNPROTECTED
5		EDIT?
6	A.	Yes. The Company was intending to refund the remaining \$215,957 of unprotected
7		EDIT to customers in April of 2022.
8	Q.	HOW DID THE RECLASSIFICATION OF THE COR-RELATED EDIT
9		IMPACT THE REFUND?
10	A.	After reclassing \$3,317,394 of COR EDIT to unprotected, the net result is an
11		unprotected asset balance of \$3,101,437, as of December 31, 2021. If SUO
12		continued with the 5-year amortization period, then the entire unprotected EDIT
13		balance (an asset) would be due from customers in April 2022. This would result
14		in a significant one-time charge in the amount of \$22.97.
15	Q.	DOES THE COMPANY HAVE AN ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL TO HELP
16		SPREAD THE IMPACT OF THE RECLASSIFICATION OVER
17		MULTIPLE YEARS?
18	A.	Yes. SUO proposes to amortize the unprotected asset at the same rate as the
19		protected liability until the unprotected asset is fully amortized.

⁵ Cause No. PUD 201800029, Final Order No. 684379 at 10, (October 4, 2018).

1	Q.	HOW LONG DOES SUO ANTICIPATE IT WILL TAKE TO FULLY
2		AMORTIZE THE UNPROTECTED ASSET OF \$3,101,437?
3	A.	SUO estimates that it will take approximately 13 years to fully amortize the
4		unprotected asset.
5	Q.	WILL CUSTOMERS RECEIVE A CREDIT OR CHARGE DURING THIS
6		PERIOD?
7	A.	No. Because the unprotected balance arising from the IRS ruling on the COR will
8		offset the return of protected EDIT, the annual refund that is normally provided in
9		April will cease until the unprotected asset is fully amortized as shown in Direct
10		Exhibit TDP-1.
11		VI. <u>COVID-19 REGULATORY ASSET</u>
12	Q.	DID THE COMPANY CREATE A REGULATORY ASSET PURSUANT TO
13		THE COMMISSION'S INTERIM ORDER ISSUED IN CAUSE NO. PUD
14		2020000506 TO RECORD INCREASED BAD DEBT EXPENSES AND
15		OTHER COSTS INCURRED AS A RESULT OF ADHERING TO THE
16		GOVERNOR'S DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY?
17	A.	Yes. Pursuant to the Commission's Interim Order the Company has recorded in a
18		regulatory asset an estimate of \$238,122 in bad debt and other incurred eligible cost
19		increases.

⁶ Cause No. PUD 202000050, Final Order No. 711412 at 4 (May 7, 2020).

Q. IS THE COMPANY REQUESTING RECOVERY OF THIS REGULATORY ASSET IN THIS PROCEEDING?

A. No, the Company is not, nor is the Company requesting carrying costs on this asset
at this time. The COVID-19 regulatory asset is not included in the PBRC Plan
calculations for the 2021 Test-Year. The Company will request appropriate
treatment and recovery of the COVID-19 regulatory asset in a future Commission
proceeding.

8 VII. <u>MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS</u>

9 Q. HAS THE COMPANY COMPLIED WITH THE REQUIREMENT IN

10 ORDER NO. 721657 OF CAUSE NO. PUD 202100114⁷ REGARDING THE

11 COST OF SERVICE STUDY AND DEPRECIATION STUDY?

A. Yes. Per Order No. 721657, the Company presents a proposed timeline to perform
a Cost of Service Study and Depreciation Study.

14 Q. WHEN DOES SUMMIT PROPOSE A DEPRECIATION STUDY AND 15 COST OF SERVICE STUDY BE PERFORMED?

A. The Company proposes to complete the Depreciation Study and Cost of Service Study in 2023 and file both studies in the 2024 PBRC. We believe the delay until 2023 is appropriate because 2022 is a usual year for the Company due to the

19 Transition Services Agreement ("TSA") with CERC. This approach reduces

⁷ Cause No. PUD 202100114, Final Order No. 721657 at 5.

1		unnecessary expenses being passed through to customers while also maintaining
2		relevant depreciation and class cost of service rates.
3		VIII. <u>CONCLUSION</u>
4	Q.	PLEASE SUMMARIZE YOUR DIRECT TESTIMONY.
5	A.	In my testimony, I provide an overview of the PBRC Plan, including updates made
6		to Rider Schedule No. 5 PBRC Plan. I discuss that the PBRC Plan is working as
7		intended and the interests of the Company and its customers remain substantially
8		aligned because of the unique combination of the PBRC Plan and the Company's
9		AMA. I identify the reclassification of EDIT since the last PRBC filing and
10		propose to amortize the unprotected asset at the same rate as the protected liability
11		until the unprotected asset is fully amortized. Finally, I propose a timeline to
12		perform both a Cost of Service Study and Depreciation Study.
13	Q.	WHAT ARE YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS?
14	A.	I recommend the Commission approve:
15		1. The reclassification of EDIT resulting in amortization of the unprotected
16		asset of \$3,101,437; and
17		2. The timeline to complete and file the Cost of Service Study and

18 Depreciation Study.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on the 15th day of March 2022, a full, true, and correct copy of the above and foregoing instrument was served on the following persons by **ELECTRONIC MAIL** and by **UNITED STATES CERTIFIED MAIL**, postage prepaid to:

Brandy L. Wreath Director of the Public Utility Division OKLAHOMA CORPORATION COMMISSION Jim Thorpe Building 2101 North Lincoln Boulevard Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105

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Curtis M. Long