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COMMISSIONERS

- BOB STUMP, Chairman
- GARY PIERCE
- BRENDA BURNS
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AZ CORP COMMISSION
DOCKET CONTROL

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF THE
 ARIZONA ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE,
 INC. FOR A HEARING TO DETERMINE THE
 FAIR VALUE OF ITS PROPERTY FOR
 RATEMAKING PURPOSES, TO FIX A JUST AND
 REASONABLE RETURN THEREON AND TO
 APPROVE RATES DESIGNED TO DEVELOP
 SUCH RETURN

Docket No. E-01773A-12-0305

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Opening Brief of
Arizona Electric Power Cooperative, Inc.
General Rates Application

Arizona Corporation Commission
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1 **INTRODUCTION**

2 Arizona Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. (“AEPCO” or the “Cooperative”) submits this
3 Opening Brief in support of its July 5, 2012 rate case application. AEPCO requests that the
4 Commission approve its revenue requirements decrease and authorize the revised rates reflecting
5 that decrease to be effective as of November 1, 2013.

6 Through the exchange of pre-filed testimony and cooperative efforts, AEPCO, Utilities
7 Division Staff and the intervenors have reached agreement on all but one of the issues involved
8 in this rate case. Accordingly, AEPCO requests Commission approval of the following
9 undisputed items:

- 10
- 11 • The depreciation rates shown on Exhibit PS-2 to AEPCO-1;
 - 12 • The Apache Station study process described in AEPCO-7;
 - 13 • Continuation of AEPCO’s Purchased Power and Fuel Adjustment Clause
14 (“PPFAC”), including continuation of the efficacy provision approved in
15 AEPCO’s prior rate cases¹ and the two PPFAC modifications described below;
 - 16 ○ The first modification removes AEPCO’s fixed fuel costs from the
17 calculation of the PPFAC Base Resources and Other Resources Bases and,
18 instead, tracks and recovers those fixed costs through the establishment of
19 a fixed fuel costs base and a separate adjustor rate based on a monthly
20 charge;²

21

22 ¹ AEPCO-4, p. 27, ll. 6-11. For example, in Decision No. 72055, the Commission ordered that AEPCO “may file a
request that the Commission review the efficacy of the [PPFAC]... with submission of any semi-annual report
required by the tariff and the Decision.”

23 ² AEPCO-4, p. 26, ll. 7-9. See also AEPCO-6, Ex. GEP-10, p. 1, ll. 10 and 25, and p. 2, ll. 10 and 24.

- 1 ○ The second modification removes the PPFAC bank balances from the fuel
2 adjustor rates and recovers those amounts, along with the fixed fuel costs
3 bank balance, through a continuing six-month amortization tariff rider;³
4 ○ An initial semi-annual PPFAC filing should be authorized, based on data
5 covering the 12 months ended December 31, 2013, to be made on
6 March 1, 2014 to become effective on April 1, 2014. Thereafter, fuel
7 adjustor filings will become effective April 1 and October 1 based upon
8 data covering historic performance during the prior 12 months ended
9 December 31 and June 30, respectively;⁴ and
10 ○ Finally, a temporary tariff rider should be authorized to close out the
11 current PPFAC by refunding or collecting the outstanding Class A
12 members' bank balances as of November 1, 2013 based on a 12-month
13 amortization.⁵

14 The sole remaining contested issue for the Commission to resolve is whether to grant
15 AEPCO's request to reduce its revenue requirements by \$4,287,465, which amounts to a revenue
16 decrease of 2.77%.⁶ AEPCO, with the full support of its members, urges the Commission to
17 approve revised rates based on a debt service coverage ratio ("DSC") of 1.32, which is the same
18 DSC approved by the Commission in AEPCO's last rate case⁷ and the same DSC which assisted
19 AEPCO in building to a very robust 31.79% equity average over the past three years.⁸ A
20 1.32 DSC produces operating cash flow that is more than sufficient to (1) cover all of the

21 _____
22 ³ AEPCO-4, p. 26, ll. 9-11; AEPCO-5, p. 14, ll. 6-10.

23 ⁴ AEPCO-5, p. 14, ll. 16-21.

24 ⁵ AEPCO-4, p. 27, ll. 16-19.

⁶ AEPCO-6, Ex. GEP-9, Col. E, ll. 2 and 3.

⁷ Decision No. 72055, Finding of Fact 51.

⁸ S-4, Ex. REV-3.

1 Cooperative's ongoing expenses, (2) meet its principal and interest payments as they become due
2 and (3) continue to build working capital to support future operating needs.⁹ In order to address
3 any potential future environmental compliance obligations, AEPCO proposes an Environmental
4 Compliance Adjustment Rider ("ECAR"). The ECAR will provide a tariff funding mechanism
5 to address any EPA requirements, but only when they and their associated costs are known and
6 measurable.¹⁰

7 Staff's position (as articulated by its consultants, Liberty Consulting Group) is that the
8 Commission should instead authorize a DSC of 1.56, which would deprive AEPCO's members
9 and their retail members of a rate decrease and give AEPCO \$4.3 million more in annual
10 revenues than it wants or needs. To place that \$4.3 million amount in context, AEPCO currently
11 estimates its EPA capital compliance costs to be expended through 2017 at only \$30 million.¹¹ If
12 Staff's 1.56 DSC is approved, it would raise more than \$17 million or almost 60% of that capital
13 requirement internally from the distribution cooperatives and their retail members. Imposing a
14 down-payment that large on current customers for a capital expenditure that small – which
15 relates to generation plant to be used for many years into the future – is not only fiscally
16 unnecessary, but generationally unfair as well. For these reasons, AEPCO opposes Staff's 1.56
17 DSC and no-decrease positions.

18 **REVENUE REQUIREMENTS DECREASE PLUS ECAR**

19 Throughout this rate case, AEPCO has presented specific, detailed evidence in support of
20 its request for a revenue requirements decrease based on a DSC of 1.32.

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23 ⁹ Hr. Tr., Vol. I, p. 71, ll. 10-14.

¹⁰ AEPCO-5, p. 7, l. 19 – p. 8, l. 9.

¹¹ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 142, ll. 4-23.

1 **Financial Performance and Non-Financial Risk Factors**

2 The single most significant factor in evaluating the appropriate DSC level is financial
3 performance.¹² In that regard, it is undisputed that AEPCO's financial performance has
4 improved significantly in recent years. Among other indicators, AEPCO has substantially
5 lowered its operating expenses since 2009.¹³ As Schedule A-2 to AEPCO's July 5, 2012
6 Application demonstrates, AEPCO has lowered its operating expenses from \$186,926,335 in
7 2009 to \$157,703,741 in 2011, a reduction of more than 15%. Further, the Cooperative's equity
8 ratio increased from a very low 5% in 2005 to a solid 29.49% at the end of its 2011 test year.¹⁴
9 According to Staff's consultants, AEPCO's financial performance since 2008 would qualify it
10 for an "A" investment-grade credit rating.¹⁵ Further and perhaps most significantly, granting
11 AEPCO's rate request and lowering its revenue requirements based on a 1.32 DSC will not
12 endanger the Cooperative's financial metrics and will allow it to maintain a strong credit
13 profile.¹⁶

14 AEPCO also rates positively on a number of the non-financial, qualitative criteria used by
15 rating agencies to evaluate the business risks of generation and transmission cooperatives.¹⁷
16 Specifically, while three of AEPCO's Class A members are Partial Requirements Members
17 ("PRM"), their contracts provide for full recovery of the Cooperative's fixed costs and, therefore,
18 would be viewed favorably by credit rating agencies.¹⁸ In addition, the fact that AEPCO
19 provides scheduling and trading services for two of its PRM members reduces AEPCO's risk

20 ¹² S-4, p. 9, l. 27; MEC-2, p. 8, ll. 1-10.

21 ¹³ Hr. Tr., Vol. I, p. 43, ll. 6-15.

22 ¹⁴ S-4, p. 3, ll. 23-25.

23 ¹⁵ S-4, p. 5, ll. 17-26, p.12, ll. 18-24 and Ex. REV-3.

24 ¹⁶ S-4, p. 13, ll. 1-5.

¹⁷ The categories of qualitative criteria discussed in the testimony are: Long-term Wholesale Power Supply Contracts/Regulatory Status; Rate Flexibility/Rate Shock Exposure; Member/Owner Profile; and Size. S-4, p. 9, ll. 28-31.

¹⁸ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 167, l. 3 – p. 169, l. 3 and p. 223, ll. 13-17.

1 profile compared to cooperatives whose members do their own planning.¹⁹ As Mr. Pierson noted
2 in response to questions by Administrative Law Judge Jibilian, this scheduling and trading
3 relationship makes the PRMs more informed about AEPCO's rates and, hence, more likely to
4 respond appropriately to price signals from AEPCO.²⁰ With regard to member/owner profile, the
5 testimony of Carl Stover (Mohave Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s witness) is clear and undisputed
6 that this factor weighs in favor of AEPCO.²¹ Moreover, he pointed out that, although AEPCO is
7 considered a small cooperative, the fact that it provides power to a geographically large area and
8 serves a diversity of loads provides a further assurance to rating agencies that AEPCO could
9 maintain its earnings if an economic downturn were to occur.²²

10 The final Moody's factor discussed in evaluating AEPCO's business risk is the
11 combination of rate flexibility and rate shock exposure. The parties' testimonies focus on three
12 aspects in this category: cost competitiveness, cost recovery efficiency and new-build exposure.
13 With regard to competitiveness, Staff's proposal to reject AEPCO's revenue requirements
14 decrease clearly will not help the Cooperative become more rate competitive. Liberty's
15 Mr. Vickroy conceded that.²³ On the subject of cost recovery efficiency, his testimony also
16 indicates that AEPCO scores high in a ratings analysis because of its low percentage of
17 purchased power²⁴ and the fact the Commission has approved a PPFAC clause to timely recover
18 purchased power costs.²⁵

19 This leaves new-build exposure. Generally, AEPCO's new-build exposure is low, given
20 the fact that AEPCO is not responsible for meeting the PRMs' current or future needs for

21 ¹⁹ AEPCO-5, p. 13, ll. 8-14; AEPCO-6, p. 4, ll. 3-6.

22 ²⁰ Hr. Tr., Vol. I, p. 81, ll. 10-25.

23 ²¹ MEC-2, p. 6, l. 20 – p. 7, l. 2 and p. 13, l. 18 – p. 15, l. 8.

24 ²² Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 185, l. 14 – p. 186, l. 12.

25 ²³ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 212, ll. 11-16.

²⁴ S-4, p. 15, ll. 6-9.

²⁵ S-4, p. 11, ll. 20-22.

1 additional capacity resources.²⁶ As to existing resources, the Apache Station study agreed to by
2 AEPCO and Staff will evaluate the continuing viability of these resources in light of known as
3 well as anticipated environmental, regulatory and market factors.²⁷ Indeed, the early efforts of
4 this ongoing planning effort already positioned AEPCO to respond promptly and successfully to
5 the EPA's regional haze requirements. The result was to reduce the capital costs associated with
6 that remediation from last year's initial estimate of \$200 million to only \$30 million.²⁸

7 Based on the foregoing, AEPCO has provided more than sufficient evidence of the
8 Cooperative's strong credit profile based on rating agency criteria – evidence which fully
9 supports AEPCO's request for a 1.32 DSC and refutes Staff's 1.56 recommendation. To the
10 extent Staff's consultants raise concerns about individual factors (to be discussed in greater detail
11 below), as Mr. Vickroy testified, a cooperative does not need to qualify for an "A" rating in
12 every category in order to receive an overall "A" investment-grade credit rating.²⁹

13 **ECAR Mechanism**

14 Another important factor supporting AEPCO's request for a revenue requirements
15 decrease is its companion proposal for an ECAR mechanism. AEPCO proposed the ECAR in its
16 rebuttal testimony in response to Staff's concerns regarding potential costs associated with the
17 EPA regional haze requirements.³⁰ In its surrebuttal testimony, Staff raised several questions
18 regarding how the ECAR mechanism would function and suggested that the rate case be held
19 open to address these issues.³¹ If the Commission approves AEPCO's request for a 1.32 DSC,

21 _____
22 ²⁶ AEPCO-5, p. 5, ll. 19-21; MEC-2, p. 10, ll. 2-8.

²⁷ AEPCO-7.

²⁸ AEPCO-2, p. 6, ll. 11-19.

²⁹ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 211, l. 21 – p. 212, l. 3.

³⁰ Hr. Tr., Vol. I, p. 75, ll. 11-20.

³¹ S-3, p. 6, l. 4 – p. 7, l. 24.

1 then AEPCO agrees the rate case should be held open so that the parties can work together to
2 refine the process for and details of the ECAR.³²

3 Specifically and as explained by Mr. Pierson, AEPCO will work with Staff to address its
4 questions and, on or before April 30, 2014, will file a revised ECAR tariff and plan of
5 administration for Commission approval.³³ The initial tariff, once approved, will set the ECAR
6 surcharge at zero.³⁴ Two months later, by June 30, 2014, AEPCO will file the results of the
7 Apache Station study.³⁵ Based on its results, AEPCO will work with its members to prepare an
8 Environmental Compliance Strategy (“ECS”) to address the EPA regional haze requirements.³⁶
9 AEPCO will then file a request to increase the amount of the ECAR surcharge based on the
10 detailed costs identified in the ECS.³⁷ This procedure will provide AEPCO sufficient time to
11 construct its alternative BART proposal by December 2017.³⁸ The Cooperative anticipates that
12 the EPA will issue its final rule incorporating AEPCO’s proposal within the next six months.³⁹
13 The estimated construction timeline is between 18 and 24 months.⁴⁰

14 All parties agree that the ECAR is an appropriate way to address cost recovery related to
15 future potential environmental compliance.⁴¹ In fact, according to Staff’s consultants, the ECAR
16 makes sense, so long as it is used to fund projects that are good for the company and customers
17 in the long term.⁴² That is exactly what the combination of the ECAR and the Apache Station
18 study will produce – a funding mechanism confidently based on accurate and detailed cost

19 _____
20 ³² AEPCO-6, p. 7, ll. 5-9.

³³ Hr. Tr., Vol. I, p. 83, ll. 19-21.

³⁴ AEPCO-6, p. 8, ll. 12-13.

³⁵ AEPCO-7.

³⁶ AEPCO-5, p. 8, ll. 2-9; AEPCO-6, p. 8, ll. 12-13.

³⁷ Hr. Tr., Vol. I, p. 83, l. 24 – p. 84, l. 3.

³⁸ Hr. Tr., Vol. I, p. 36, l. 24 – p. 37, l. 10.

³⁹ Hr. Tr., Vol. I, p. 32, ll. 12-16.

⁴⁰ Hr. Tr., Vol. I, p. 47, l. 17 – p. 48, l. 2.

⁴¹ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 228, ll. 7-12.

⁴² Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 228, ll. 13-21.

1 information,⁴³ not the interim estimates and comparisons prepared last year that Staff's
2 consultants continue to rely on in support of their 1.56 DSC recommendation.⁴⁴

3 **Impact on Retail Customers**

4 Finally, the revenue requirements decrease combined with the ECAR is clearly the option
5 favored by, and in the best interests of, AEPCO's members and its ultimate customers – the retail
6 members of the distribution cooperatives. The intervenors and those who spoke during the
7 public comment session presented uniform testimony and comment in support of the retail
8 customers' need and desire for rate relief. Further, several expressed this preference for a rate
9 decrease now, even on the understanding that rates would likely increase later under the ECAR.⁴⁵

10 Another benefit of the ECAR, which makes it the superior choice as compared to Staff's
11 no-decrease proposal, is that the funds collected via the ECAR would be refundable to the
12 members in the event that implementation of the ECS is not required.⁴⁶ Under Staff's proposal
13 to hold rates at the higher level based on the chance those millions might be needed, the
14 prohibition against retroactive ratemaking will bar any return of those monies to ratepayers
15 should all or any portion of the funds not be required.⁴⁷

16 Mr. Stover summed the superiority of AEPCO's "Rate Decrease Now/ECAR in Reserve
17 Approach" this way:

18 So what does the examiner do? We have got a situation here in which about the
19 only thing people can agree is we don't know what the impact will be and what
20 will be the amount.

21 * * *

22 ⁴³ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 145, l. 15 – p. 146, l. 7.

⁴⁴ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 218, l. 20 – p. 219, l. 6 and p. 235, l. 19 – p. 236, l. 3.

23 ⁴⁵ Hr. Tr., Vol. I, p. 9, l. 14 – p. 10, l. 6, p. 109, l. 6 – p. 111, l. 4 and p. 121, l. 5 – p. 122, l. 4.

⁴⁶ Hr. Tr., Vol. I, p. 35, ll. 4-10.

24 ⁴⁷ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 221, l. 1 – p. 222, l. 3.

1 It seems to me the ECAR adjustment provides a vehicle for the Commission to
2 say, guys, we are going to wait until you really know what is going on, until you
really know the numbers, until you quantify the impact.⁴⁸

3 AEPCO's proposal of a 1.32 DSC coupled with the ECAR mechanism to provide a path
4 for additional monetary support – only if, as and when it is actually required – is clearly the most
5 tempered, accurate and legally correct solution on this issue.

6 **LIBERTY'S UNSUPPORTED NO-DECREASE POSITION**

7 In contrast to the comprehensive evidence presented in favor of AEPCO's revenue
8 requirements decrease and ECAR proposal, Liberty opposes the proposal based on generalities,
9 speculation regarding future risk and unlikely worst-case scenarios.

10 **Erroneous Methodology**

11 As an initial matter, Liberty admits that its charge in this case was to assess AEPCO's
12 business risks and determine the appropriate DSC in light of those risks.⁴⁹ Instead, Liberty
13 started with a pre-conceived assumption of risk and then arbitrarily backed into a DSC "fallout"
14 number of 1.56:

15 Q. [By Mr. Sullivan] But the actual DSC that you are recommending is a
16 fallout number based upon the existing rates, correct?

17 A. [By Mr. Vickroy] It is a fallout number saying it should be well above 1.32.⁵⁰

18 Liberty's methodology is so lacking in foundation and analysis that Mr. Vickroy testified he
19 could not quantify the level of DSC that would accurately reflect AEPCO's business risks –
20 conceding that it was only "possibly above 1.50. But that's not a quantifiable number."⁵¹

21 Raising still more questions about the merit of Liberty's position, Mr. Vickroy testified that even

22 ⁴⁸ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 144, l. 11 – p. 145, l. 25.

23 ⁴⁹ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 232, ll. 13-15.

⁵⁰ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 210, ll. 8-11.

⁵¹ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 208, ll. 9-15 (emphasis supplied).

1 though he thought 1.32 was too low, he would not have recommended a rate increase if the
2 current rates had produced a 1.32 DSC.⁵²

3 **Ambiguous and Speculative Future Risks**

4 The future risks that Liberty has identified as the basis for its no-decrease/1.56 DSC
5 recommendation are environmental regulation and market conditions.⁵³ The problem with
6 Liberty's reliance on these alleged risks is that its analysis either ignores or lacks any foundation
7 in known and measurable or AEPCO-specific data.

8 For example, Liberty's irrational focus on AEPCO's preliminary calculation of the \$190
9 million cost to implement the EPA's original FIP ruling flies in the face of more recent, and quite
10 positive, developments with the EPA:

11 Q. [By Mr. Grant] Now, after AEPCO provided Liberty with that \$190
12 million estimate, you were aware that AEPCO submitted a supplemental
13 petition for reconsideration with the EPA in late May which was granted
14 in early June, correct?

15 A. [By Mr. Vickroy] Yes, as I understand it.

16 Q. In granting AEPCO's application for reconsideration, the EPA stated that
17 it planned to publish a notice of proposed rulemaking seeking comments
18 on AEPCO's proposed alternative. Do you recall that?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Most recently, you are aware, are you not, the EPA has agreed AEPCO
21 should start the process of modifying the state implementation plan to
22 incorporate AEPCO's proposed BART alternative, correct?

23 A. I don't know about that.

24 Q. Would you take that subject to check?

A. Sure.

⁵² Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 207, ll. 4-6 and p. 209, ll. 2-10.

⁵³ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 194, l. 9 – p. 195, l. 19.

1 Q. And did you read Mr. Pierson's rejoinder? Because that is his statement at
2 page 2, lines 19-21.

3 A. All right.

4 Q. Based on these developments, you do understand it is now AEPCO's
5 current position that its anticipated EPA compliance capital expenditures
6 are only about \$30 million, not the \$190 million estimate that was
7 provided to you several months ago?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. So, Mr. Vickroy, you relied on AEPCO's early estimate of 190 million in
10 construction costs in developing your 1.56 recommendation. But now that
11 AEPCO's more informed estimate has dropped to only 30 million, you
12 nonetheless continue to recommend that higher DSC of 1.56, correct?

13 A. Correct.⁵⁴

14 The reason for Liberty's refusal to consider this more recent information was revealed by
15 Mr. Vickroy's testimony – Liberty simply doesn't care what the actual costs are going to be.
16 Rather, Liberty bases its position on ambiguous concerns about possible future EPA regulations
17 and the uncertainties surrounding the potential and obviously unknown economic impacts
18 thereof.⁵⁵ Liberty focuses on these uncertainties despite the undisputed fact that such costs are
19 not known and measurable:

20 Q. [By Administrative Law Judge Jibilian] So it doesn't matter whether the
21 costs of environmental compliance are known and measurable?

22 A. At this point, no. We are interested in what the magnitude or ballpark of
23 the risks are.⁵⁶

24 Rather than guess at "magnitude" or deal in "ballparks," AEPCO's 1.32 DSC plus ECAR
position offers a safe, sound and legally defensible basis upon which to proceed. Each of those
elements is wholly lacking in Liberty's position.

⁵⁴ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 219, l. 7 – p. 220, l. 14.

⁵⁵ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 196, ll. 4-13.

⁵⁶ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 229, ll. 10-13.

1 Likewise, Liberty’s conclusion that AEPCO’s coal units face significant risk due to the
2 natural gas market is based on vague observations of trends across the country.⁵⁷ Liberty ignores
3 AEPCO’s substantial reduction in coal costs by more than 20% since 2011, as well as recent and
4 projected increases in natural gas prices – but concedes both advantage AEPCO in the market.⁵⁸
5 Further, Liberty offered virtually no substantive response to Mr. Kurtz’ rebuttal testimony in
6 which he provided a thorough analysis of AEPCO’s coal units, including their performance since
7 2000, the increase in coal-fired generation output in 2013 and future projections.⁵⁹ Liberty’s
8 continued criticism of AEPCO’s coal units despite the lack of evidentiary support could lead one
9 to the conclusion that the consulting group may simply have a predilection against coal-fired
10 generation.

11 Liberty also bases its risk analysis on admittedly extreme scenarios. For example,
12 Mr. Vickroy expressed concerns over the possibility that Apache Station could become a
13 stranded asset, but conceded that such a scenario would be an “extreme case.”⁶⁰ Further, when
14 asked to identify the harm that would result from granting the Cooperative’s revenue
15 requirements decrease, Mr. Vickroy could not provide any specific examples of the likely
16 outcome, other than to confirm that a decrease would not lead to financial ruin.⁶¹

17 Finally, Mr. Antonuk’s testimony reveals many of his risk concerns are based on
18 anecdotal observations of other cooperatives in other parts of the country, namely Kentucky and
19 New Hampshire.⁶² He provides no evidence to support the leap that the problems he identified
20 with those cooperatives are present or likely to occur with AEPCO. In fact, all evidence is to the

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⁵⁷ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 196, ll. 14-19.

22 ⁵⁸ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 216, l. 19 – p. 218, l. 1.

⁵⁹ Compare AEPCO-2, June 13, 2013 Report, pp. 2-8 with S-7, p. 1, l. 19 – p. 2, l. 25.

23 ⁶⁰ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 225, ll. 1-18.

⁶¹ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 231, l. 12 – p. 232, l. 9.

24 ⁶² Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 255, l. 10 – p. 256, l. 14 and p. 259, l. 11 – p. 260, l. 7.

1 contrary. Extensive testimony confirmed the commitment that AEPCO's Board of Directors has
2 to balancing the interests of the members with the need to maintain AEPCO's financial health.⁶³
3 Similarly, AEPCO has and will continue to evaluate the economic viability of Apache Station, as
4 demonstrated by the expansive scope of the currently ongoing Apache Station study. The results
5 of that effort will be filed with the Commission no later than June 30 of next year.⁶⁴

6 **Disregard of Impact on Customers**

7 Liberty also cites rate shock to justify its no-decrease position. While, as a general rule,
8 it is preferable to avoid rate shock, that preference is not appropriate, given the specific
9 circumstances of – as well as the known and measurable economics concerning – AEPCO and its
10 members. On this subject, Liberty again ignores the details. Specifically, in response to the
11 overwhelming testimony regarding Arizona's rural rate payers' need for and entitlement to a rate
12 decrease now, Mr. Antonuk simply dismisses this testimony in favor of his generic observations
13 of the preferences of customers elsewhere.⁶⁵

14 Another example involves Trico Electric Cooperative, Inc., whose CEO testified that his
15 cooperative's rates are among the highest in the state because of its service territory
16 characteristics and, therefore, it needs any rate relief it can get.⁶⁶ The 1.56 DSC would not only
17 keep Trico's rates higher than necessary, but would also assign it more than \$450,000 a year for
18 additional purchased power resources that will no longer be available to Trico after 2014.
19 Specifically, the rates proposed by Liberty include a margin requirement associated with two
20
21

22 ⁶³ Hr. Tr., Vol. I, p. 87, l. 24 – p. 88, l. 15, p. 91, l. 20 – p. 92, l. 20, p. 97, l. 8 – p. 98, l. 7 and p. 119, l. 19 – p. 120,
l. 14.

23 ⁶⁴ AEPCO-7.

23 ⁶⁵ Hr. Tr., Vol. II, p. 251, l. 24 – p. 253, l. 2.

24 ⁶⁶ Hr. Tr., Vol. I, p. 119, ll. 4-12 and p. 122, ll. 2-4.

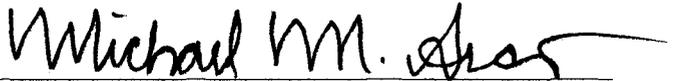
1 purchased power agreements that expire in late 2014.⁶⁷ AEPCO is committed to address this
2 issue with Staff and the Commission next year by removing from its rates costs and charges
3 related to these contracts when they expire. However, Liberty's 1.56 DSC proposal erroneously
4 inflates these costs and needlessly intensifies the magnitude of the problem.

5 **CONCLUSION**

6 Based on the foregoing, AEPCO urges the Administrative Law Judge to recommend and
7 the Commission to approve its requested 2.77% revenue requirements decrease based on a DSC
8 of 1.32. Specifically, AEPCO requests approval of the revenue requirements shown on
9 Exhibit GEP-9 to AEPCO-6, Column E, Lines 2 and 3, as well as the specific rates shown on
10 Exhibit GEP-10 to AEPCO-6, Column 6. Additionally, AEPCO requests approval of the
11 undisputed items listed in the Introduction to this Brief, page 1, line 10 through page 2, line 13.

12 RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED this 30th day of August, 2013.

13 GALLAGHER & KENNEDY, P.A.

14
15 By 

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19 **Original and 13 copies** filed this
30th day of August, 2013, with:

20 Docket Control
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23 _____
24 ⁶⁷ See S-2, Schedule G-6, p. 5, l. 68 (showing \$494,565 in additional Trico resources fixed costs).
3727842v3/10421-0067

1 **Copies** of the foregoing delivered
this 30th day of August, 2013, to:

2 Teena Jibilian
3 Administrative Law Judge
Arizona Corporation Commission
4 Hearing Division
1200 West Washington Street
5 Phoenix, Arizona 85007

6 Commissioner Bob Stump, Chairman
Arizona Corporation Commission
7 1200 West Washington Street
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8 Commissioner Gary Pierce
9 Arizona Corporation Commission
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11 Commissioner Brenda Burns
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