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May 24, 2000

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BY HAND DELIVERY

Ms. Blanca Bayo, Director
Division of Records and Reporting
Room 110, Easley Building
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850

ORIGINAL

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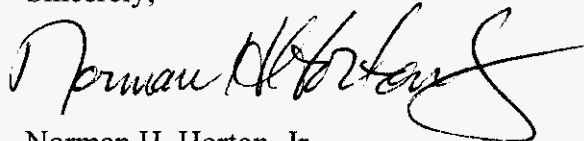
Dear Ms. Bayo:

Enclosed for filing on behalf of South Florida Natural Gas are an original and 15 copies of South Florida Natural Gas' Petition for Approval of Late Payment Charge.

Please indicate receipt of this document by stamping the enclosed extra copy of this letter.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



Norman H. Horton, Jr.

NHH:amb

Enclosures

cc: Mr. Al Kara
Parties of Record

APP _____
CAF _____
CMP _____
COM _____
CTR _____
ECR _____
LEG _____
OPC _____
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OFFICE OF RECORDS AND REPORTING

DOCUMENT NUMBER-DATE
06421 MAY 24 8
FPSC-RECORDS/REPORTING

BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In Re: Petition for approval of late payment)
charge by Atlantic Utilities, a Florida Division of)
Southern Union Company d/b/a South Florida)
Natural Gas)
_____)

Docket No.
Filed: May 23, 2000

ORIGINAL

PETITION

Atlantic Utilities, a Florida Division of Southern Union Company d/b/a South Florida Natural Gas ("South Florida"), by its undersigned attorneys, herewith requests approval of revisions to its Natural Gas Tariff on file with the Commission to provide for a late payment charge. In support of its petition, South Florida states:

1. South Florida is a public utility providing natural gas service to customers in New Smyrna Beach, Edgewater and portions of Volusia County. The address of South Florida is:

South Florida Natural Gas
P.O. Box 248
New Smyrna Beach, FL 32170-0248

Notices, orders and other documents issued in this docket should be provided to:

Norman H. Horton, Jr., Esq.	Mr. Al Kara
Messer, Caparello & Self, P.A.	South Florida Natural Gas
Post Office Box 1876	P.O. Box 248
Tallahassee, FL 32302-1876	New Smyrna Beach, FL 32170-0248
850/222-0720 (telephone)	(904)428-5721
850/224-4359 (telecopier)	(904)427-6663 (telecopier)

2. With this petition, South Florida is seeking approval to apply a late payment charge to past due balances. South Florida does not currently apply a late payment charge but does incur costs associated with past due balances. During the 16 month period January 1999 through April 2000, South Florida's delinquent accounts averaged 12.06% or approximately 519 customers

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monthly. These costs are currently borne by all customers or both customers and Southern Union Company's shareholders. With the ability to collect a late payment charge, some of the costs associated with unpaid balances would be paid by those customers who carry the unpaid balances. More importantly, a late payment charge should encourage prompt payment of accounts by customers. The ability to collect some of these costs from the customer responsible for the cost and the added incentive to pay accounts in a timely manner will benefit the overall body of customers.

3. The Company's proposed late payment charge would apply when a customer fails to pay a bill by the "past due" date indicated on the bill. The proposed late payment charge (not applicable to federal, state or local governmental entities) is 1.5 percent of any unpaid prior months' billings or \$5.00, whichever is greater. The excepted governmental entities are subject to imposition of a late payment charge in accordance with Section 215.422, Florida Statutes (state agencies), 218.70 - .79, Florida Statutes (local governmental agencies), and 31 U.S.C. 3901 - 3907 (federal governmental agencies). South Florida would impose late payment charges on the respective government accounts at a rate no greater than allowed, and in a manner permitted by the applicable statutes. Prior to initiating the late payment charge to customers, South Florida would give notice to all customers that, in the event of late payment, they will be subject to the late charges in the amounts set forth above.

4. The Commission has previously granted late payment charge authority, consistent with the authority sought hereunder, in other proceedings. See, for example, Orders No. PSC-99-1953-TRF-GU (Sebring Gas); PSC-98-0261-FOF-GU (City Gas); PSC-96-0371-FOF-GU (Peoples Gas) and PSC-96-1000-FOF-GU (St. Joe Natural Gas). Additionally, the Commission has approved late payment charges for electric and water utilities, and recently approved a similar charge for

Florida Public Utilities Company but no order has been issued.

5. A copy of the revised tariff sheet with the late payment charge section is attached hereto in both legislative and a "clean format."

6. Upon obtaining the Commission's approval of South Florida's proposed late payment charge, the Company will modify its monthly customer bills to reflect the applicable charge and the past due date by which the bills must be paid to avoid imposition of such charge. Also, as stated previously, South Florida will give customers notice of the imposition of the late payment charge.

WHEREFORE, South Florida requests that the Commission approve this petition for authority to collect a late payment fee and grant its Staff authority to administratively approve the attached tariff sheets.

Respectfully submitted,

MESSER, CAPARELLO & SELF, P.A.



NORMAN H. HORTON, JR., ESQ.
Post Office Box 1876
Tallahassee, FL 32302-1876
850/222-0720 (telephone)
850/224-4359 (telecopier)

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**SOUTH FLORIDA NATURAL GAS
 REPORT OF NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS DELINQUENT
 BY MONTH FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1999 - APRIL 2000**

MONTH	NUMBER OF BILLS SENT	NUMBER OF DELINQUENT CUSTOMERS	% CUSTOMERS DELINQUENT BY MONTH
Jan-99	4,270	448	10.49%
Feb-99	4,329	497	11.48%
Mar-99	4,352	426	9.79%
Apr-99	4,369	536	12.27%
May-99	4,298	619	14.40%
Jun-99	4,178	498	11.92%
Jul-99	4,117	450	10.93%
Aug-99	4,126	413	10.01%
Sep-99	4,115	381	9.26%
Oct-99	4,147	349	8.42%
Nov-99	4,251	449	10.56%
Dec-99	4,359	471	10.81%
Jan-00	4,412	693	15.71%
Feb-00	4,478	767	17.13%
Mar-00	4,508	685	15.20%
Apr-00	4,488	615	13.70%
Total	68,797	8,297	-----
Avg over period	4,300	519	12.06%

Delinquent bills are those twenty days or more past the billing date.

B. 000 RULES AND REGULATIONS (Continued)

B. 406 - CHANGE OF OCCUPANCY -- When change of occupancy takes place on any premises to which the Company rendered Gas Service, Notice thereof shall be given by the Customer to the Company no less than three (3) days prior to the date of change. The Customer will be held responsible for all Gas Service furnished to such premises until such notice is received by the Company and the Company has had reasonable time to discontinue the Gas Service; however, the Company will automatically terminate Gas Service to the Customer upon receipt of an Application of a succeeding occupant, if such notice has not been received prior thereto. If the new application is received prior to the termination of service of the initial occupant such that the service will not need to be terminated, the new occupant will be charged \$10.00 in lieu of the initiation of service charge as provided by Paragraph B. 408 below.

B. 407 - TERMS OF SERVICE -- Gas Service will be on a continuous basis until terminated under the Rules and Regulations herein contained, unless specified otherwise in a Service Agreement.

B. 408 - SERVICE CHARGES -- A charge will be made at the time of an initial connection of Gas Service or the reconnection of Gas Service where the Customer's Gas Service has been previously terminated for any reason:

- 1 - For a Residential Customer \$20.00
- 2 - For a Commercial Customer \$30.00

B. 409 - DELINQUENT BILLS -- Bills are due when rendered and if not paid in full within twenty (20) days from billing date, the bill becomes delinquent. Charges for services due and rendered which are unpaid as of the past due date are subject to a Late Payment Charge of 1.5% or \$5.00, whichever is greater, except the accounts of federal, state, and local governmental entities, agencies, and instrumentalities. A Late Payment Charge shall be applied to the accounts of federal, state, and local governmental entities, agencies, and instrumentalities at a rate no greater than allowed, and in a manner permitted by applicable law. Gas Service may be discontinued any time after the bill becomes delinquent, upon five (5) working days' written notice to the Customer, and, if discontinued, such service will not be restored until all amounts due the Company are paid in full. A working day for purposes of the paragraph shall be any day on which the Company's office is open and the U.S. mail is delivered. If it becomes necessary for the Company to dispatch an employee to the Customer's premises as the result of a Customer's non-compliance with a written delinquency notice, a bill collection charge of \$10.00 will be made unless the delinquent bill is not collected and the Customer's Gas Service is terminated. If the service is terminated and subsequently reinstated, a charge will be made at the time in accordance with Paragraph B. 408 above.

Issued by: Alexander M. Kara
Regional Vice President

Effective:

B. 000 RULES AND REGULATIONS (Continued)

B. 410 - CHANGE OF RATE SCHEDULE -- If it becomes necessary for a Customer to change from one rate schedule to another, or from one service address to another, Company may request that all amounts due under the old rate or at the old address be paid in full prior to such change becoming effective. No change of rate schedule shall be retroactive.

B. 500 METERS

B. 501 -LOCATION OF METERS -- The Company will determine the location of, install and properly maintain at its own expense such meter or meters and metering equipment as it may deem necessary to measure the quantity of gas used by the Customer.

Issued by: Alexander M. Kara
Regional Vice President

Effective:

B. 000 RULES AND REGULATIONS (Continued)

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Regional Vice President

Effective: