

Decision No. C25-0383

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

PROCEEDING NO. 25A-0153FG

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF COLORADO FOR AN ORDER GRANTING TO IT A CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY TO EXERCISE FRANCHISE RIGHTS IN THE TOWN OF LOCHBUIE, COLORADO.

**COMMISSION DECISION DEEMING APPLICATION
COMPLETE AND GRANTING APPLICATION**

Issued Date: May 20, 2025

Adopted Date: May 14, 2025

I. BY THE COMMISSION

A. Statement

1. This matter comes before the Commission for consideration of an Application filed by Public Service Company of Colorado. (“Public Service” or the “Company”) on April 3, 2025, for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (“CPCN”) to exercise franchise rights in the Town of Lochbuie, Weld County, Colorado (“Lochbuie” or the “Town”).

2. The Commission provided notice of this Application on April 8, 2025, to all interested persons, firms, and corporations. No petition to intervene or notice of intervention has been filed, and thus the Application is uncontested. Accordingly, the Application will be determined without a formal hearing in accordance with § 40-6-109(5), C.R.S., and Rule 1403, 4 *Code of Colorado Regulations* (“CCR”) 723-1 of the Commission’s Rules of Practice and Procedure.

3. Public Service is engaged in, *inter alia*, the sale, distribution, and transportation of natural gas service in its certificated areas in the State of Colorado. The Town is located within such certificated areas.

4. Public Service requests the Commission issue a Decision granting it a CPCN to exercise franchise rights in Lochbuie. Pursuant to Ordinance No. 2024-703, adopted February 18, 2025, the Town granted Public Service a 20-year franchise to provide natural gas service within Lochbuie, which became effective on March 1, 2025, and will expire on February 28, 2045.

5. On January 7, 1975, Lochbuie passed and adopted Ordinance No. 6, granting Public Service a franchise to provide natural gas service within Lochbuie. The Decision No. and Application No. are unknown.

6. On August 1, 1989, Lochbuie passed and adopted Ordinance No. 168 which increased the franchise fee to 3 percent.

7. On January 4, 2000, Lochbuie passed and adopted Ordinance No. 320 granting Public Service a franchise to provide natural gas service within Lochbuie for a period of one year. On April 11, 2000, the Commission, in Decision C00-356, Application 00A-140FG, granted Public Service a CPCN to exercise franchise rights as described in Ordinance No. 320.

8. On April 3, 2001, Lochbuie passed and adopted Ordinance No. 351, granting Public Service a franchise to provide natural gas service within Lochbuie. On October 18, 2001, the Commission, in Decision No. C01-1062, Application 01A-453FG, granted Public Service a CPCN to exercise franchise rights as described in Ordinance No. 351.

9. On February 5, 2003, 2001 Lochbuie passed and adopted Ordinance No. 385, granting Public Service a franchise to provide natural gas service within Lochbuie.

On May 9, 2003, the Commission, in Decision No. C03-0485, Application 03A-156FG, granted Public Service a CPCN to exercise franchise rights as described in Ordinance No. 385. This franchise was further extended by Ordinance No. 433 on February 4, 2004, and Ordinance No. 456 on September 22, 2004.

10. On December 15, 2004, Lochbuie passed and adopted Ordinance No. 460, granting Public Service a franchise to provide natural gas service within Lochbuie. On June 24, 2005, the Commission, in Decision No. C05-0798, Application 05A-156FG, granted Public Service a CPCN to exercise franchise rights as described in Ordinance No. 460. This Franchise was further extended by Ordinance No. 2024-702 on December 17, 2024.

11. A utility wishing to exercise any franchise agreement or privileges entered into with a municipality must obtain a CPCN from the Commission pursuant to § 40-5-102, C.R.S. When the municipality and utility enter into a franchise agreement, that agreement must be submitted to the Commission for approval. *See* § 40-5-102, C.R.S. Such applications allow the Commission to review franchise agreements to ensure that the terms are reasonable and in the public interest.

12. The Commission understands the utility and the municipality may want to revise the terms established in a franchise agreement at some point in the future and that existing franchise agreements have scheduled expiration dates. Upon negotiation of a new or amended franchise agreement, the utility shall return to the Commission in a timely manner to obtain authorization to implement the provisions of the new franchise agreement. In the event that this franchise is not renewed at the expiration of its term or is terminated for any reason, the Company is directed to notify the Commission in a timely manner.

13. According to the franchise agreement, as consideration for the franchise rights granted and in recognition of Public Service' right to use the Town streets, the Town requires Public Service to collect and remit to the Town a franchise fee equal to 3 percent of all revenues received from the sale of natural gas service within the Town, excluding revenues received from the Town for the sale of natural gas service to the Town.

14. No other utility is authorized to provide natural gas utility service within the areas for which Public Service seeks a certificate in this application.

15. We find the franchise is required by public convenience and necessity and the terms of the franchise agreement are just, reasonable, and in the public interest. However, in the event that issues of revenue requirement, cost allocation, and rate design are implicated by any provision of the franchise agreement, those issues will be analyzed in an appropriate Commission proceeding. Approval of the franchise agreement does not constitute approval of, or precedent regarding any principle or issue in revenue requirement, cost allocation, or rate design in any natural gas adjustment, refund, or rate case proceedings.

16. Public Service, and its predecessors, have provided gas service in the Town since 1983, subject to a relevant franchise agreement. Because the areas encompassed by the above-referenced franchises are currently served by Public Service, the Company is not required to provide a feasibility study for each area as set forth in Rule 4100(b)(VI), 4 CCR 723-4 of the Commission's Rules Regulating Gas Utilities.

17. We find that Public Service has the financial ability and is qualified and competent to conduct the utility operations sought under its application.

18. Public Service' natural gas service tariffs, currently on file with the Commission, will be used for service under this application.

19. Providing uninterrupted service to the residents of Lochbuie is in the public interest. Therefore, the Commission finds that the Application is in the public interest and should be granted.

II. ORDER

A. The Commission Orders That:

1. The Application filed by Public Service Company of Colorado., for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (“CPCN”) to exercise franchise rights pursuant to Ordinance No. 2024-703 in the Town of Lochbuie is deemed complete, for purposes of § 40-6-109.5, C.R.S., and is granted.

2. The granting of the CPCN to operate under the terms of this franchise agreement is in the public interest and in accordance with the terms of § 40-5-102, C.R.S.

3. The franchise shall remain in effect for a period of 20-years and became effective on March 1, 2025, and will expire on February 28, 2045.

4. The 20-day time period provided by § 40-6-114(1), C.R.S., to file an Application for Rehearing, Reargument, or Reconsideration begins on the first day following the effective date of this Decision.

5. This Decision is effective upon its Issued Date.

**B. ADOPTED IN COMMISSIONERS' DELIBERATIONS MEETING
May 14, 2025.**

(S E A L)



ATTEST: A TRUE COPY

Rebecca E. White,
Director

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

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MEGAN M. GILMAN

TOM PLANT

Commissioners