

BEFORE THE IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

YOLANDA BENNETT,)	
)	CASE NO. IPC-E-03-17
Complainant,)	
)	
vs.)	
)	
IDAHO POWER COMPANY,)	
)	ORDER NO. 29389
Respondent.)	
)	

In August 2003, Yolanda Bennett made an informal complaint against Idaho Power Company alleging that the Company had over-billed her for electric service at her Hailey residence. Attempts to resolve the informal complaint to her satisfaction were unsuccessful. Having exhausted her informal complaint remedy, Ms. Bennett filed a "formal" complaint on October 10, 2003, pursuant to the Commission's procedural Rules 24 and 54. IDAPA 31.01.01.024 and .054. In her formal complaint, Ms. Bennett asserts that she was over-billed by approximately \$150 for service during the months of May, June and July 2003. After reviewing the merits of the complaint, the Commission issues this Order.

THE COMPLAINT

Ms. Bennett left her home on March 26, 2003 for an extended stay. Before leaving, she maintains that she turned-off all of her electric appliances except for her refrigerator and water heater. When she received her forwarded electric bills, she noticed that her bills were higher than expected. She then contacted Idaho Power and voiced her concerns about the high monthly bills.

In response to Ms. Bennett's concerns, Idaho Power verified that her meter readings for at least two months (May and July) were reported correctly. After speaking to an Idaho Power customer service representative on July 8, 2003, Ms. Bennett states that she asked a neighbor to go into the house to make sure "everything" but the refrigerator was turned-off at the circuit breaker box. Ms. Bennett returned home on July 23, 2003.

On July 25, an Idaho Power customer service representative met her at home to check for problems inside the residence. At that time, the electric meter was showing very little usage. The Company service representative reported that the residence is an all-electric, two-bedroom townhouse with baseboard heating and no air conditioning. The service representative then set up a watts-per-hour meter on the refrigerator to determine its electrical consumption. No abnormalities were noted.

Ms. Bennett's electrical usage during the period in question is considerably higher than her consumption the previous year. The table below shows her monthly electric consumption.

<u>Year</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>August</u>
2002	1409	856	590	270	129	329
2003	1253	730	1399	1589	670	230

THE COMPANY RESPONSE

When Ms. Bennett called to inquire about her high monthly bills, the Company did verify the electric meter readings. Because she was out of town, the Company was unable to examine the inside of her residence until her return. Following her return, the Company removed the meter so that its accuracy could be tested. The Company reports that her old meter tested at 99.55% accuracy. The Company also ruled out any malfunction to her refrigerator based upon the testing of the refrigerator's electrical consumption. The Company suspects that her baseboard-heating units must have been left "on" during her absence. The Company maintains that comparing the degree-day data for the three months in 2002 and 2003 lends support to this theory.

DISCUSSION

The Commission has reviewed the formal complaint and the Company's response to that complaint. We find that the complaint and the response sets out sufficient facts for us to issue a decision in this matter.

Based upon the record before us, the exact cause of the differences in consumption for the months May, June and July 2002 versus 2003 months has not been determined. The Company did verify the accuracy of the meter readings for May and July 2003. In addition, the Company removed the residential meter and tested the accuracy of the meter itself. The

Company reported that the meter tested at 99.55% accuracy. Because of Ms. Bennett's absence from her residence, she was not able to verify whether her appliances and baseboard-heating units were turned "off."


Based upon the Company's testing of its meter, we find that the meter has accurately recorded the electric usage at her residence. We find that the Company has issued monthly bills for her residence based upon the recorded electric consumption. We further find that Ms. Bennett has not demonstrated that Idaho Power over-billed her for the months of May, June and July 2003. Because there does not appear to be any meter malfunction or failure, there is no need to issue a "corrected" bill pursuant to our Rule 204, IDAPA 31.21.01.204.

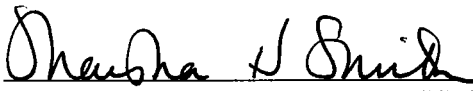
ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the complaint of Yolanda Bennett against Idaho Power Company as more particularly described above is dismissed.

THIS IS A FINAL ORDER. Any person interested in this Order (or in issues finally decided by this Order) or in interlocutory Orders previously issued in this Case No. IPC-E-03-17 may petition for reconsideration within twenty-one (21) days of the service date of this Order with regard to any matter decided in this Order or in interlocutory Orders previously issued in this Case No. IPC-E-03-17. Within seven (7) days after any person has petitioned for reconsideration, any other person may cross-petition for reconsideration. See *Idaho Code* § 61-626.

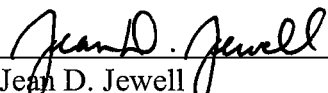
DONE by Order of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission at Boise, Idaho this 2nd
day of December 2003.


PAUL KJELLANDER, PRESIDENT


MARSHA H. SMITH, COMMISSIONER


DENNIS S. HANSEN, COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:


Jean D. Jewell
Commission Secretary

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