



REGULATORY FOCUS

January 7, 2011

MAJOR RATE CASE DECISIONS--CALENDAR 2010

The average return on equity (ROE) authorized electric utilities in 2010 approximated 10.3% compared to 10.5% in 2009. There were 59 electric ROE determinations in 2010, up substantially from 39 in 2009. The average ROE authorized gas utilities approximated 10.1% in 2010, compared to 10.2% in 2009. There were 36 gas cases that included an ROE determination in 2010, and 29 in 2009. Not included in these averages is a Sept. 16, 2010, New York Public Service Commission decision authorizing Consolidated Edison of New York's steam operations a 9.6% ROE. We note that this report utilizes the simple mean for the return averages.

After reaching a low in the early-2000's, the number of rate case decisions for energy companies has generally increased over the last several years. There were 124 electric and gas rate decisions in 2010, versus 95 in 2009, and only 32 back in 2001. Increased costs, including environmental compliance expenditures, the need for generation and delivery infrastructure upgrades and expansion, renewable generation mandates, and higher employee benefit costs argue for a continuation of the increased level of rate case activity over the next few years.

We note that electric industry restructuring in certain states has led to the unbundling of rates and retail competition for generation. Commissions in those states are now authorizing revenue requirement and return parameters for delivery operations only (which we footnote in our chronology beginning on page 5), thus complicating historical data comparability. We also note that while the heightened business risk associated with the sluggish economy may have increased corporate capital costs, higher average authorized ROEs did not materialize in 2010 or in 2009. In fact, average authorized ROEs have declined slightly over the last two years, and some state commissions have cited customer hardship as a significant factor influencing their equity return authorizations.

The table on page 2 shows the average ROE authorized in major electric and gas rate decisions annually since 1990, and by quarter since 2004, followed by the number of observations in each period. The tables on page 3 show the composite electric and gas industry data for all major cases summarized annually since 1997 and by quarter for the past eight quarters. The individual electric and gas cases decided in 2010 are listed on pages 5-9, with the decision date (generally the date on which the final order was issued) shown first, followed by the company name, the abbreviation for the state issuing the decision, the authorized rate of return (ROR), return on equity (ROE), and percentage of common equity in the adopted capital structure. Next we show the month and year in which the adopted test year ended, whether the commission utilized an average or a year-end rate base, and the amount of the permanent rate change authorized. The dollar amounts represent the permanent rate change ordered at the time decisions were rendered. Fuel adjustment clause rate changes are not reflected in this study. We note that the cases and averages included in this study may be slightly different from those in our online rate case history database, with any differences likely the result of this study's inclusion of ROE determinations that are rendered in cost-of-capital-only proceedings in California.

(Text continued on page 4.)

Average Equity Returns Authorized January 1990 - December 2010

Year	Period	Electric Utilities		Gas Utilities	
		ROE %	(# Cases)	ROE %	(# Cases)
1990	Full Year	12.70	(44)	12.67	(31)
1991	Full Year	12.55	(45)	12.46	(35)
1992	Full Year	12.09	(48)	12.01	(29)
1993	Full Year	11.41	(32)	11.35	(45)
1994	Full Year	11.34	(31)	11.35	(28)
1995	Full Year	11.55	(33)	11.43	(16)
1996	Full Year	11.39	(22)	11.19	(20)
1997	Full Year	11.40	(11)	11.29	(13)
1998	Full Year	11.66	(10)	11.51	(10)
1999	Full Year	10.77	(20)	10.66	(9)
2000	Full Year	11.43	(12)	11.39	(12)
2001	Full Year	11.09	(18)	10.95	(7)
2002	Full Year	11.16	(22)	11.03	(21)
2003	Full Year	10.97	(22)	10.99	(25)
	1st Quarter	11.00	(3)	11.10	(4)
	2nd Quarter	10.54	(6)	10.25	(2)
	3rd Quarter	10.33	(2)	10.37	(8)
	4th Quarter	10.91	(8)	10.66	(6)
2004	Full Year	10.75	(19)	10.59	(20)
	1st Quarter	10.51	(7)	10.65	(2)
	2nd Quarter	10.05	(7)	10.54	(5)
	3rd Quarter	10.84	(4)	10.47	(5)
	4th Quarter	10.75	(11)	10.40	(14)
2005	Full Year	10.54	(29)	10.46	(26)
	1st Quarter	10.38	(3)	10.63	(6)
	2nd Quarter	10.68	(6)	10.50	(2)
	3rd Quarter	10.06	(7)	10.45	(3)
	4th Quarter	10.39	(10)	10.14	(5)
2006	Full Year	10.36	(26)	10.43	(16)
	1st Quarter	10.27	(8)	10.44	(10)
	2nd Quarter	10.27	(11)	10.12	(4)
	3rd Quarter	10.02	(4)	10.03	(8)
	4th Quarter	10.56	(16)	10.27	(15)
2007	Full Year	10.36	(39)	10.24	(37)
	1st Quarter	10.45	(10)	10.38	(7)
	2nd Quarter	10.57	(8)	10.17	(3)
	3rd Quarter	10.47	(11)	10.49	(7)
	4th Quarter	10.33	(8)	10.34	(13)
2008	Full Year	10.46	(37)	10.37	(30)
	1st Quarter	10.29	(9)	10.24	(4)
	2nd Quarter	10.55	(10)	10.11	(8)
	3rd Quarter	10.46	(3)	9.88	(2)
	4th Quarter	10.54	(17)	10.27	(15)
2009	Full Year	10.48	(39)	10.19	(29)
	1st Quarter	10.66	(17)	10.24	(9)
	2nd Quarter	10.08	(14)	9.99	(11)
	3rd Quarter	10.26	(11)	9.93	(4)
	4th Quarter	10.30	(17)	10.09	(12)
2010	Full Year	10.34	(59)	10.08	(36)