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Georgia Public Service Commission

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(800) 282-5813

244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334-5701

FAX: (404) 463-6532
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Docket No. 37036

DOCKET# 37036
DOCUMENT# 226293

City of Cochran Gas System
112 West Dykes St
PO Box 8
Cochran, GA 31014
DELIVERED VIA E-MAIL

RE: Inspection Report GM25-017

Dear Mr. Richard Newbern -

Based on review of City of Cochran Gas System's response, discussions with Pipeline Safety Staff and/or Operator, and/or any additional information provided for Inspection Report DL22-011, I have cleared the following Enforcement Actions:

Violation	Description	Inspection#
Under Consent Agreement	Operator is under a Consent Agreement.	DL22-011

Any new or continuing Enforcement Action(s) not listed above will be addressed during the Operator's future inspection. No action is required by City of Cochran Gas System at this time.

Please let me know if there are any questions or concerns regarding this correspondence at (404) 985-4271 or mthebert@psc.ga.gov. Thank you for your continuing contribution toward increased pipeline safety.

Sincerely,

Michelle Thebert
Director, Office of Pipeline/Facilities Safety

COMMISSIONERS

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REPORT OF NATURAL GAS SAFETY

INSPECTION NO: GM25-017

OPERATOR: City of Cochran Gas System

INVESTIGATOR: Glen Murphy

INSPECTION DATE: April 14, 2025 REPORT MAILED DATE: April 20, 2026

Any questions concerning this report may be directed to the above address or by telephoning (404) 463-6526.

1. PURPOSE OF INSPECTION

To conduct a follow-up inspection of the Operators previously existing probable violations.

2. CONTINUING VIOLATIONS

3. CLEARED VIOLATIONS

Cleared on 4/14/2025

Violation	Description	Inspection#	Date
Under Consent Agreement	Operator is under a Consent Agreement.	DL22-011	2/21/2022

4. NEW VIOLATIONS

5. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS/COMMENTS

CITY OF COCHRAN / FOLLOWUP INSPECTION
INSPECTION NUMBER GM25-017 / DOCKET NUMBER 37036

On April 14, 2025, Staff met with the City of Cochran to perform an Informal Conference of the Operator's previously existing probable violations and Consent Agreement.

During this review, the Operator was represented by:
Candace Summerall– City Clerk
Wade Sharpe – MGAG/SRCS (Consultant)

Commission Staff was represented by:
Michelle Thebert – Director, Facilities Inspection Unit
Jeff Baggett – Supervisor, Facilities Protection Unit
Glen Murphy – Lead Pipeline Inspector
Jason Smith – Pipeline Inspector

At the time of this inspection, the City of Cochran was under one (1) previously existing Consent Agreement with the Director to address a total of $20,000 in outstanding proposed civil penalties for probable violations which were cited in Inspection Number DL17-014. Staff reviewed these items with the Operator and determined the following:

CONSENT AGREEMENT CONTINUING

The Operator entered into a Consent Agreement with the Director to address the outstanding penalties. This agreement was approved by the Commission on January 7, 2022.

Under the Consent Agreement, the City of Cochran agreed that:

1. Cochran shall replace the Empire regulator station at an estimated cost of $16,000. This shall be completed within six (6) months of the Commission approved order in this case.
2. Cochran shall replace cathodic protection ground bed for Empire Community rectifier at an estimated cost of $13,500. This shall be completed within six (6) months of the Commission-approved order in this case.
3. Cochran shall provide online training for Designated Employee Representative (DER) in Drug and Alcohol Plan at an estimated cost of $200. This shall be completed within six (6) months of the Commission approved order in this case.
4. Cochran shall participate in the Georgia Pipeline Emergency Response Initiative (GPERI) for a period of three (3) years at an estimated cost of $275 per year.

FIRST FOLLOWUP INSPECTION: In inspection (DL22-011) Staff found that:

1. The City of Cochran, upon further investigation, determined that the Empire Regulator Station is not their facility, and that it belongs to the Mid-State Energy Commission.
2. The City of Cochran provided Staff with a statement of charges for the replacement of the Empire Community cathodic protection ground bed.
3. The City of Cochran provided Staff with a certificate for training for their DER for Drug and Alcohol training.
4. Staff verified that the City of Cochran did participate in the GPERI program CY's 2020 and 2021.

Due to the issue with the Empire Regulator Station Staff referred this issue back to the Director for resolution. In Inspection DL22-011 the Director advised that: "Due to the fact that the regulator station does not belong to the City of Cochran, Cochran contact the Director to discuss an alternative option to resolve the outstanding civil penalty."

SECOND FOLLOWUP INSPECTION: During this inspection (DL24-020) Staff noted that there was no response from the City of Cochran to Inspection Number DL22-011. Staff advised the Operator that they still need to contact the Director to discuss an alternative option to resolve the outstanding civil penalty.

FIRST OPERATOR RESPONSE: On March 4th, The City of Cochran requested an Informal Conference to discuss resolution from Follow-Up Inspection (DL22-011) on the Empire Regulator Station that has been determined to be owned by Mid-State Energy Commission. During the Informal Conference, it was determined that staff will visit the City of Cochran to observe mapping of the Empire Regulator Station and its pipeline connections for determination of responsibilities.

During Inspection Number (JJ19-055) A Consent Agreement was made for PSC Staff to visit The City of Cochran and perform training for PAP that will place them on a 4-year cycle for inspections. This Staff Training will be conducted this year.

THIRD FOLLOWUP INSPECTION: In Inspection Number (GM25-020) staff (Glen Murphy and Chuck Whitiker) During this review, the Operator was represented by:
Candace Summerall– City Clerk
Wade Sharpe – MGAG/SRCS (Consultant)

1. Performed a Public Awareness Program training session with the City of Cochran. This class allows The City of Cochran to have the establishment of a four-year timeline on Cochran's PAP. Class was completed and successful.

Inspection Number (JJ19-055) for Consent Agreement can be cleared at this time.

2. During Informal Conference with the City of Cochran (GM25-017) It was determined staff will visit the City of Cochran to review maps and expense reports generated for the rebuild of Empire Regulator Station owned by Mid-State Energy Commission. On April 28, 2025, Inspection Number (GM25-021) Staff observed mapping of how the Cochran, Hawkinsville, and Mid-State Energy gas systems are operated, with Mid-State owning the Enterprise Regulator Station that feeds solely a section of the Cochran Gas System. The initial estimated cost to rebuild the Empire Regulator Station was $16,000.00. The actual cost of the regulator station rebuild was $5,175.00. Difference being $10,825.00.

   In 12-2020, The City of Cochran renewed 2,665' of steel pipe with 2" PE on Lakeview Church Road for a cost total of $29,800.00.

In 2-2023, The City of Cochran renewed 1,764' of steel pipe with 2" PE on Malgene Drive and Bowman Dr. for a cost of $69,011.00.
In 2-2025, the City of Cochran installed an isolation valve for the regulator station on Mac Thompson Road for a cost of $15,124.00.

The City of Cochran acknowledges the difference in cost of the Empire regulator station rebuild and has requested that consideration for the amount of cost spent to upgrade the City of Cochran's gas system with main renewals and regulator station upgrades would be allowed to off set the difference. The total amount of upgrades to the City of Cochran's gas system from 2020 to present time is $113,935.00 per invoices received by staff.

Being that the Empire regulator station has been rebuilt to satisfy staff by Mid-State Energy Commission with the cost being adjusted back to the City of Cochran at the end of the year gas sales, also with system upgrades performed of the City of Cochran's gas system, Staff has determined the Civil Penalty for this Consent Agreement can be cleared at this time.

Please review and respond to this report in accordance with the attached Instructions for Responding to Enforcement Letters Issued by the Georgia Public Service Commission.

OPERATOR RESPONSE FORM

Operator Name: City of Cochran

Informal Conference Requested: Yes ☐ No ☐

Docket Number: 37036

Responses required within **30 days of electronic mail.** Provide the following information for this report:

Response to Inspection Number:_____

Type of Enforcement Action(s) cited in report:			Informal Conference Requested	
☐ Notice of Probable Violation (NOPV)	☐ New	☐Continuing	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Notice of Amendment (NOA)	☐ New	☐Continuing	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Warning Letter	☐ New	☐Continuing	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Letter of Concern	☐ New	☐Continuing	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Observed Issue	☐ New	☐Continuing	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Proposed Civil Penalty	$ _____ PCP $ Amount (Total for report)			

Indicate below (A-E) based on the type of Enforcement Actions in this report: (Check all that apply)
Complete a separate copy of Page 2, Operator Response to Enforcement Action, for each cited item.

A. Response for **Notice of Probable Violation** (with and without proposed civil penalty):
   1. ☐ Written statement indicating that corrective measures have achieved Compliance or
   2. ☐ Written plan of action outlining the corrective measures that will be taken to achieve compliance and when compliance is anticipated.

B. Response for **NOA**:
   1. ☐ Contested: Attach written explanation, information, or other material in answer to the allegations in the Notice of Amendment stating your reasons for objecting to the NOA, in whole or in part; or
   2. ☐ Not Contested: Explanation, information, or other material believed to warrant modification of the NOA in whole or in part; or
   3. ☐ Written request for clarification. (Attached)

C. Response for **Continuing** and/or **Existing** violations:
   Current status, updates, expected completion dates, proposed modifications, etc., of the continuing and/or existing violations, even if this information was previously provided. Referencing a previously filed response letter, as status, updates, etc. alone is not sufficient for this response. Failure to provide this information may result in formal interrogatories from the Director through data requests.

D. Response for ☐ **Letter of Concern** / ☐ **Warning Letter**
   I acknowledge receipt of the Letter of Concern/Warning Letter:_____
   SIGNATURE / TITLE

   Additional Comments: (Optional)_____

E. Response for **Observed Issue** and **No Violation**: (Optional Response)
   Staff requests that the Operator acknowledge receipt of the Observed Issue/No Violation in writing, or by submitting an email to the FPU Director

Operator Response to Enforcement Action

Enforcement Action for:_____ ☐ New Violation ☐ Continuing Violation
Enter Code / Commission Rule (Complete a separate attachment for each enforcement action)

Enforcement Action(s) cited in report:	Conference Requested:	
☐ Notice of Probable Violation (NOPV)	☐ Yes ☐ No	$_____ Proposed Penalty for this violation
☐ Notice of Amendment (NOA)	☐ Yes ☐ No	
☐ Warning Letter	☐ Yes ☐ No	
☐ Letter of Concern	☐ Yes ☐ No	
☐ Observed Issue	☐ Yes ☐ No	
☐ Proposed Civil Penalty	☐ Yes ☐ No	

OPERATORS RESPONSE: _____

Response Provided by: _____ Date:_____
Name / Title

Internal use only:

Lead Inspector: _____ Date Response Reviewed:_____

Actions Acceptable: ☐ Yes ☐No Re-inspection Needed:☐ Yes ☐ No Clear Violation:☐ Yes ☐ No

Supervisor Review by:_____ Date Reviewed:_____

Additional Enforcement Recommended: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Director Review

Approved: ☐ Yes ☐No Schedule Special Follow-up Inspection: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Cleared Violation: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Comments:_____

Filings:
For all written responses or any other official correspondence, the Operator shall file the response at the following address:

Ms. Sallie Tanner, Executive Secretary
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

The Operator must file **five (5)** copies of any response and/or official correspondence, as well as a CD with an electronic version of the response in Microsoft Word and/or a PDF, if applicable.

Informal Conference:
Any Operator who chooses to request an informal conference shall request such a conference through emailing the Director (michellet@psc.state.ga.us), calling the Director (404-463-2765), or selecting the "Request Conference" choice.

Civil Penalty Payments:
Certified check for the full amount of the recommended civil penalty or consent agreement amount made payable to the Georgia Public Service Commission. The Operator's name, applicable Docket No., and Inspection Report No. must be included on the certified check. Mail payment to:

Ms. Michelle Thebert, Director, Facilities Protection Unit
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Hearing Requests:
The Operator has the right to request a hearing before the full Commission to contest the alleged probable violations, recommended civil penalties, and all other proposed actions of enforcement. A request for a hearing must be submitted in writing and in accordance with Commission Rule 515-2-1-.04. The Operator must include a statement of the issues that you intend to raise at the hearing. The issues may relate to the allegations, new information, proposed compliance order, proposed civil penalty, or any other recommendation for enforcement action. Please refer to Commission Rule 515-9-3-.11 and O.C.G.A. § 46-2-91 for assessment considerations upon which civil penalties are based. An operator's failure to specify an issue may result in a waiver of the right to raise that issue at hearing. The request must also indicate whether or not the Operator will be represented by counsel at the hearing.

Open Records and Trade Secret Filings:
The Operator is advised that any material provided to the Commission, and all materials prepared by the Commission, including the Notice of Probable Violations and any Orders issued in this case, may be considered public information and subject to disclosure under the Georgia Open Records Act (O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 et seq.). If you believe that any portion of your response material is security sensitive, privileged, confidential or may cause your company competitive disadvantages and would qualify for protection under the Commission's "Trade Secret Rule" (Commission Rule 515-3-1-.11), you must, along with the complete original document clearly marked "TRADE SECRET" on each page, provide a second copy of the document with the portions you believe qualify for trade secret treatment redacted, and an explanation of why you believe the redacted information qualifies for such trade secret treatment. Should the Commission receive a request for disclosure of any "TRADE SECRET" material, you will be notified, if after review, the materials and your provided justification are deemed not to meet any exemptions provided in the Georgia Open Records Act. You may appeal the Commission's decision to release material at that time. Your appeal will stay the release of those materials until a final decision is made.

BEFORE THE GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
STATE OF GEORGIA

IN THE MATTER OF:	)	
	)	
City of Cochran Gas System	)	**DOCKET NO. 37036**
	)	
	)	
	)	

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, do hereby certify that I have this day served a copy of the within and foregoing document on the following persons via email or United States Mail as follows:

*Sallie Tanner, Executive Secretary
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334

*Richard Newbern, City Manager/Utilities
City of Cochran Gas System
112 West Dykes Street
P.O. Box 8
Cochran, GA 31014
rnewbern@cityofcochran.com

*Michelle Thebert, Facilities Protection Unit Director
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334

Respectfully Submitted this 23rd day of April 2026:

Cathy Nesbitt

Cathy Nesbitt, Administrative Assistant
Georgia Public Service Commission
Facilities Protection Unit
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334