

ORDER NO. 92557

Investigation of the August 11, 2024
Home Explosion and Fire at 2300
Arthurs Woods Drive in Baltimore Gas
and Electric Company's Service
Territory

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BEFORE THE
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF MARYLAND

Case No. 9892

Issue Date: July 31, 2026

ORDER INITIATING INVESTIGATION
INTO THE AUGUST 11, 2024 HOME EXPLOSION AND FIRE

On August 11, 2024, a home explosion and fire at 2300 Arthurs Woods Drive in Bel Air, Maryland resulted in a destroyed home, two fatalities, and three injuries. The home's natural gas and electric service was supplied by Baltimore Gas and Electric Company ("BGE"). The National Transportation Safety Board ("NTSB") recently issued its Final Report¹ on the incident dated June 25, 2026. For the reasons described herein, the Commission directs Commission Technical Staff to perform an investigation to determine if any State and federal laws or regulations were violated and the sufficiency of BGE's corrective actions undertaken related to the incident.

I. The NTSB Investigation

The NTSB is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating significant gas pipeline events, among other things. The NTSB determines the probable causes of accidents and events and investigates, and issues safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. Regarding the August 11, 2024

¹ NTSB Pipeline Investigation Report (PIR-26-04) at <https://www.nts.gov/investigations/Pages/PLD24LR006.aspx>.

event, the NTSB determined that *“the probable cause was BGE's ineffective response to reports of a suspected natural gas leak, which allowed for a suspected leak, caused by electrical arcing of electrical service lines, collocated in a common trench with a plastic gas service-line pipe and its tracer wire, to be left unrepaired for over 10 hours, resulting in gas leaking from the service-line pipe, migrating to the accident home, and igniting.”*²

Members of the Engineering Division in Technical Staff (“Staff”) represented the Public Service Commission of Maryland (“Commission”) as a party to the NTSB investigation. The federal rules applicable to parties to an NTSB investigation limit participation to technical experts, ban legal counsel, and restrict public statements pursuant to 49 Code of Federal Regulations (“CFR”) § 831.11. The NTSB does not assign faults or blame for an accident or incident. As specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person.”³ “Participants in an investigation (e.g., party representatives, party coordinators, and/or the larger party organization) must follow all directions and instructions from NTSB representatives.”⁴ In addition, assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations.

II. Rationale for Additional Investigation

Federal statutory requirements in 49 CFR § 1154(b) prohibit the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for

² *Id.* at 15.

³ 49 CFR § 831.4.

⁴ 49 CFR § 831.11(a)(4).

damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report, thereby necessitating additional investigation by the Commission. Among other things, the NTSB's probable cause determination raises concerns with an ineffective BGE response to reports of a suspected natural gas leak and the separation of BGE gas and electric facilities in a common trench that must be investigated further. Code of Maryland Regulations ("COMAR") 20.55.09.01 requires gas utilities such as BGE to "exercise reasonable care to reduce the hazards to which its employees, its customers, its contractors, and the general public may be subjected." COMAR 20.50.02.01 also states that "[t]he electric plant of a utility shall be constructed, installed, maintained, and operated in accordance with accepted good engineering practice in the electric industry to assure, as far as reasonably possible, continuity of service, uniformity in the quality of service furnished, and the safety of persons and property."

The NTSB's probable cause determination also requires further investigation into the adequacy of BGE's common trench separation distances. Compliance with the National Electric Safety Code is required by COMAR 20.50.02.02A for common trench separation distances. The Commission explored similar issues with regard to BGE in Case No. 9653.⁵ The NTSB's probable cause determination in the current case also raises concerns that may overlap with BGE call center accessibility issues being investigated in Case No. 9850⁶ and gas system inspection issues being investigated in Case No. 9791.⁷

⁵ Case No. 9653, *Investigation of Baltimore Gas and Electric Company Regarding a Building Explosion and Fire in Columbia, Maryland on August 25, 2019*.

⁶ Case No. 9850, *Baltimore Gas and Electric. Company's Customer Call Center Inaccessibility*.

⁷ Case No. 9791, *Investigation into Gas System Inspection Issues Raised Regarding Baltimore Gas and Electric Company*.

Commission Decision

Now that the NTSB investigation has concluded, Staff can pursue an investigation independent of NTSB direction and instruction. Staff is hereby directed to pursue an investigation of the home explosion and fire at 2300 Arthurs Woods Drive to determine if any State and federal laws or regulations were violated and the sufficiency of BGE's corrective actions undertaken. To the extent that Staff's applicable findings and proposed corrective actions overlap with Case Nos. 9653, 9791 and 9850 as discussed herein, Staff should raise them in its investigation.

Following the completion of the Staff's investigation, the Commission will determine next steps, including whether an order to show cause should be issued related to why BGE should not pay civil penalties pursuant to *Annotated Code of Maryland*, Public Utilities Article § 13-201, or if any other remedy is appropriate. The Commission hereby initiates Case No. 9892 to retain information and filings related to the Staff's investigation.

IT IS, THEREFORE, this 31st day of July, in the year Two Thousand Twenty-Six, by the Public Service Commission of Maryland, **ORDERED** that Commission Technical Staff shall perform an investigation of the August 11, 2024 home explosion and fire at 2300 Arthurs Woods Drive as described herein. The investigation report shall be filed within 120 days of the issuance of this Order.

/s/ Kumar P. Barve

/s/ Frederick H. Hoover, Jr.

/s/ Bonnie A. Suchman

/s/ Odogwu Obi Linton

/s/ Ryan C. McLean

Commissioners