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**Deborah M. Franco, Esq.**  
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October 11, 2021

**Electronic Filing**

Aida Camacho-Welch  
Office of the Secretary  
NJ Board of Public Utilities  
44 South Clinton Avenue  
P. O. Box 350  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0350

**Re: In the Matter of the Petition of South Jersey Gas Company for Approval of the Closure of Its Office Located At 111 North Franklin Boulevard, Pleasantville, New Jersey Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 14:3-5.1(e) BPU Docket No. \_\_\_\_\_**

Dear Ms. Camacho-Welch:

Enclosed please find a Petition and supporting documents of South Jersey Gas Company which have been filed electronically today through the Board's e-filing program. Due to the pandemic, and in accordance with the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities ("BPU") March 19, 2020 and May 20, 2020 Orders issued in BPU Docket No. EO20030254, hard copies are not being provided at this time, but can be provided at a later time, as needed.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah M. Franco".

Deborah M. Franco

DMF:caj  
Enclosure

cc: J. Ford  
S. Peterson  
M. Caroselli  
B. Lipman  
M. Travaline

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES**

<b>IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>PETITION</b>
<b>SOUTH JERSEY GAS COMPANY FOR</b>	<b>:</b>	
<b>APPROVAL OF THE CLOSURE OF ITS</b>	<b>:</b>	
<b>OFFICE LOCATED AT 111 NORTH</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>BPU DOCKET NO. _____</b>
<b>FRANKLIN BOULEVARD,</b>	<b>:</b>	
<b>PLEASANTVILLE, NEW JERSEY</b>	<b>:</b>	
<b>PURSUANT TO N.J.A.C. 14:3-5.1(e)</b>	<b>:</b>	

**TO THE HONORABLE BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES:**

Petitioner, South Jersey Gas Company (“South Jersey,” “Petitioner,” or “Company”), a public utility corporation of the State of New Jersey, with its principal office at One South Jersey Place, Atlantic City, New Jersey, hereby petitions the Board of Public Utilities (“BPU” or “Board”) for authorization for the closure of the Company’s walk-in service center located at 111 North Franklin Boulevard, Pleasantville, New Jersey (“Pleasantville Service Center”). In support of this Petition, South Jersey Gas states the following:

**I. BACKGROUND**

1. South Jersey is engaged in the transmission, distribution, transportation, and sale of natural gas within its defined service territory within the State of New Jersey. Said service territory includes all or portions of the following Counties: Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem. Within its service territory South Jersey serves approximately 407,300 customers.

2. South Jersey respectfully requests the Board’s authorization to close the Pleasantville Service Center located at 111 North Franklin Boulevard, in the City of Pleasantville, County of Atlantic pursuant to N.J.A.C. 14:3-5.1(e). As set forth below, South Jersey will continue to provide a high level of service to its customers after the proposed closure of the Pleasantville

Service Center and, therefore, the closure of the Pleasantville Service Center is not unreasonable and will not unduly prejudice the public interest.

3. The proposed closure of the Pleasantville Service Center applies only to the in-person services offered by staff at the Pleasantville location and will not impact the operations of South Jersey's other utility operations that currently exist at this location and in Pleasantville and the surrounding area in any way.

## **II. THE BOARD SHOULD APPROVE THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THE PLEASANTVILLE SERVICE CENTER**

4. The Pleasantville Service Center was closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic on March 14, 2020 and currently remains closed due to pandemic-related staffing considerations. During this time, in addition to on-line payments, customer transactions at the Pleasantville Service Center have been facilitated using a "drop box" option for customer payment and correspondence. After the proposed closure, the drop box option will remain available at the Pleasantville location.

5. The Company has experienced significantly decreased transaction volume at the Pleasantville Service Center, as well as the other walk-in service centers in the Company's service territory. While this decline was first attributable to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Company has an obligation to assess the long term impacts of the pandemic on customer behavior and to responsibly manage the Company's resources to derive the maximum potential benefit for customers and the Company going forward

6. Through June 30, 2021, transactions at the Company's walk-in service centers – including both in-person and drop box transactions – declined nearly 70% compared to the same period in 2020. This follows a significant reduction in transaction volume in 2020 as well, where the Company saw just 57% of its 2019 volume. Presently, the Company's walk in centers are on

pace for fewer than 25,000 transactions for the full year in 2021, compared to over 115,000 in 2019.

7. The Company determined that the Pleasantville Service Center can be closed with minimal impact to customers because, in addition to the declining number of transactions at the location, customers who desire in-person service can be served by the Company's nearby Atlantic City headquarters.

8. The Company's Atlantic City headquarters is located approximately five miles from the Pleasantville Service Center and includes a state-of-the-art service center to handle customer transactions. The Atlantic City location houses the full South Jersey Gas utility offices, including the majority of the utility's customer service operations. This location allows the Company to offer a fully staffed walk-in service center, with the ability to add staff as needed to address volume as well as provide certain expertise as needed from the full South Jersey Gas Customer Experience team located within the Atlantic City headquarters.

9. The Atlantic City location provides increased access to public transit, as it is located approximately 1.3 miles from the Atlantic City Bus Terminal and as close as 0.3 miles from additional bus stops.

10. The Company will also maintain its existing drop box at the location of the Pleasantville Service Center, which will allow customers to make convenient, secure payment drop offs with regular weekday collections.

11. The Company will also maintain its existing walk-in service centers in its service territory, for a total of five centers, at the following locations, in addition to the Atlantic City location:

- **Cape May County – Swainton Office**  
1708 Rt. 9, North Swainton, NJ 08210

- **Gloucester County – Glassboro Office**  
142 S. Main Street, Glassboro, NJ 08028
- **Cumberland County – Millville Office**  
1211 N. 2nd Street, Millville, NJ 08332
- **Atlantic County – Folsom Corporate Headquarters**  
1 South Jersey Place, Folsom, NJ 08037

12. South Jersey’s customers will benefit from approximately \$172,000 in annual operations and maintenance savings on a going forward basis as a result of the proposed closure of the Pleasantville Service Center. These savings result from the Company being able to allocate its resources among the remaining walk-in service centers and from eliminating costs associated with reopening and restaffing the Pleasantville Service Center.

### **III. NOTICE TO AFFECTED CUSTOMERS AND MUNICIPALITIES**

13. Pursuant to the requirements of N.J.A.C. 14:3-5.1(e)(2), South Jersey will publish a copy of the closure notice attached hereto as Exhibit A in a newspaper in general circulation serving the affected area(s). The Company will post a copy of the closure notice on the front door and/or in the front reception area of the Pleasantville Service Center and post a copy on the Company’s website. The closure notice will also be translated into Spanish. In addition, South Jersey will send a cover letter and the closure notice to the clerks of each affected municipality pursuant to N.J.A.C. 14:3-5.1(e)(2).

14. In addition to the above notices, the Company will keep customers informed of their service options following the closure of the Pleasantville Service Center through effective and ongoing communication. The Company’s customer communications may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Updating the address for walk-in service centers to the Company’s Atlantic City headquarters for customers in the affected area;
- Social media messaging (*e.g.*, through the Company’s Twitter and Facebook feeds);

- Informing telephone customer service and collection personnel to direct customers in the affected area to the Company's Atlantic City headquarters;
- Informing local and state social and senior agencies of the closure of the Pleasantville Service Center and advising them to direct customers in affected areas to the Company's Atlantic City headquarters; and
- Updating the Company's website to reflect the closure of the Pleasantville Service Center.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

WHEREFORE, based on the foregoing, South Jersey respectfully requests that the Board issue an Order:

- a. Approving the proposed closure of the Company's Pleasantville Service Center pursuant to N.J.A.C. 14:3-5.1; and
- b. Grant such other relief as the Board deems just, reasonable and necessary in connection with this Petition.

Respectfully submitted,  
SOUTH JERSEY GAS COMPANY



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By: Deborah M. Franco, Esq.  
VP, Rates, Regulatory and Sustainability  
South Jersey Industries

Dated: October 11, 2021

Communications addressed to the Petitioner  
in this case are to be sent to:

Deborah M. Franco, Esq.  
Vice President, Rates, Regulatory and Sustainability  
South Jersey Industries  
520 Green Lane  
Union, New Jersey 07083  
[dfranco@sjindustries.com](mailto:dfranco@sjindustries.com)

**VERIFICATION**

STATE OF NEW JERSEY )

)            ss:

COUNTY OF ATLANTIC )

I, Marissa Travaline, being duly sworn according to law, upon this oath, deposes and says:

1. I am Vice President, Customer Experience for the Petitioner in the foregoing Petition and I am authorized to make this Affidavit on behalf of the Petitioner.
2. The statements made in the foregoing Petition correctly portray the information set forth therein, to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

*Marissa C Travaline*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Marissa Travaline  
Vice President, Customer Experience

Sworn and subscribed to be  
before me this 11<sup>th</sup> day of  
October, 2021

*Carolyn Jacobs*

Notary Public  
CAROLYN A. JACOBS

NOTARY PUBLIC OF NEW JERSEY

My Commission Expires October 28, 2023





**NOTICE OF FILING AND PUBLIC NOTICE**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF SOUTH JERSEY GAS COMPANY FOR  
APPROVAL OF THE CLOSURE OF ITS OFFICE LOCATED AT 111 NORTH  
FRANKLIN BOULEVARD, PLEASANTVILLE, NEW JERSEY PURSUANT TO  
N.J.A.C. 14:3-5.1(e)**

**BPU DOCKET NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that on October 11, 2021, South Jersey Gas Company (“South Jersey” or “Company”), a New Jersey public utility company, filed a petition with the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (“Board” or “BPU”) in BPU Docket No. \_\_\_\_\_ (“Petition”) seeking approval to close the walk-in service center located at 111 North Franklin Boulevard, Pleasantville, New Jersey (“Pleasantville Service Center”). The Company will maintain its existing drop box at the Pleasantville Service Center location, which will be available for customers to make convenient, secure payment drop offs with weekday collections. Customers who wish to complete in-person transactions may be served at the Company’s Atlantic City headquarters, located at 3800 Atlantic Avenue, Atlantic City, New Jersey, approximately five miles from the Pleasantville Service Center.

Customers may submit written comments regarding the Company’s proposed office relocation. The Board is accepting written and/or e-mailed comments. Although both will be given equal consideration, the preferred method of transmittal is by e-mail to ensure timely receipt while the Board continues to work remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Written comments may be submitted to Aida Camacho-Welch, Board Secretary, at the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, 44 South Clinton Avenue, P.O. Box 350, Trenton, NJ 08625-0350. E-mail comments should be submitted to [board.secretary@bpu.nj.gov](mailto:board.secretary@bpu.nj.gov). Please include the name of the petition and the docket number when submitting comments.

Any written comments or objections must be submitted by no later than close of business on October 27, 2021.

A copy of this Notice of Filing is being served upon the clerk of each effected municipality. Copies of South Jersey’s filing and this Notice of Filing are also posted on the Company’s website at <http://www.southjerseygas.com/About-South-Jersey-Gas/Regulatory-Compliance-Tariff-Information.aspx>.