

Our Readers Write

The 1783 Project

By Paul F. Petrick

One year from now, you will not be able to turn around without receiving notice of America’s semiquincentennial jubilee. The jollity of the occasion will not change the fact that it will be seven years premature. The historical significance assigned to July 4, 1776, the date the Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Second Continental Congress, is befuddling. Without victory in the Revolutionary War, which began over a year earlier, any declarations regarding American independence made during the summer of 1776 would have the same significance today as the “declarations of independence” made by the 11 Confederate States in 1860-61. The U.S.A.’s real birthdate is September 3, 1783 – the day the Treaty of Paris was signed.

Dubbed “the greatest victory in the annals of American diplomacy” by historian Samuel Flagg Bemis, the Treaty of Paris formally ended the Revolutionary War and answered any questions regarding the status of the nascent American nation. Executed by John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and John Jay, representing the United States, and David Hartley on behalf of the British Crown, the agreement was made possible by the knockout punch delivered nearly two years earlier by Franco-American forces at the Battle of Yorktown. The impact of that blow caused a revolution of its own 3,000 miles away in London, as a parliamentary majority opposed to American independence was replaced by one amenable to it.

From an American perspective, the terms of the treaty were quite generous. Article I contained British recognition of American independence. Article II doubled the size of the country by establishing the Mississippi River as the new republic’s western border. This satisfied the American objective of winning sufficient territorial concessions to allow for westward expansion. The U.S. would double in size again with the Louisiana Purchase two decades hence, but America was already on its way to spanning the continent when the ink touched parchment in Paris.

Despite the rout at Yorktown, the favorable terms of the treaty were not a foregone conclusion. Rather, the final text was made possible only when Adams, Franklin, and Jay decided to declare independence from Congress and their French ally.

The Revolutionary War was merely the North American theater of a world war that involved not only the Americans taking up arms against the British, but also the French, Spanish, and Dutch. Combat spread across the globe from the Caribbean to the Mediterranean to India.

Likewise, the Treaty of Paris was part of the larger “Peace of Paris” that ended the wider conflict. The interlocking agendas of the various powers created complexity, leading Franklin to remark, “There were so many interests to be consider’d and settled in a peace between five different countries that it was well not to flatter ourselves with a very speedy conclusion.”

Counterintuitively, the three American peace commissioners found they could get a better deal from the British without the French. The Earl of Shelburne, Britain’s new prime minister, saw an opportunity for a strong commercial relationship between Britain and her former colonies. War and empire are extremely expensive. Shelburne wanted the benefits of trans-Atlantic trade without the cost of maintaining overseas colonies. Conversely, the French sought to keep the new nation small, weak, and economically dependent on France.

Realizing that negotiating separately with the British was the best path to prosperity, the American peace commissioners took it upon themselves to do just that. This was an explicit violation of the instructions they received from Congress as well as an implicit violation of the 1778 agreement that brought France into the war. But Adams, Franklin, and Jay knew it would be easier to ask for forgiveness than for permission and that the terms of the agreement with Britain would be an offer Congress could not refuse.

Franklin said, “there never was a good war or a bad peace.” Right on war, Franklin’s comments on peace are forgivable because he could not have foreseen the 1919 Treaty of Versailles. But the Peace of Paris was a terrific conclusion to the war for the Americans. The Spanish also fared well, receiving Florida from Britain in exchange for minimal effort. And despite losing the war, Britain gained substantially from the peace. France was the big loser, gaining a few shards of the British Empire at an enormous financial cost, the consequences of which would precipitate the French Revolution.

The Treaty of Paris officially created the United States of America which prides itself on being a “nation of laws.” The Declaration of Independence did not have the force of law. The Treaty of Paris did. True freedom cannot be merely declared. It must be won.



A Pleasant Summer Morning At The Rocky Ford Golf Course
It was a pleasant morning at the Rocky Ford Golf Course Tuesday, cool and quiet under the trees, with only a few individual golfers pursuing their own ways around the course and just enjoying themselves. Even if you don’t golf, Play Park Hill is a nice place to visit.
(Photo by Laura Thompson)

NOTICE OF FILING OF AMENDED TARIFF FOR THE BLACK HILLS ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (BHEAP) IN COLORADO P.U.C. NO. 11 ELECTRIC TARIFF of Black Hills Colorado Electric, LLC d/b/a Black Hills Energy

You are hereby notified that Black Hills Colorado Electric, LLC, d/b/a Black Hills Energy, 105 South Victoria Avenue, P.O. Box 75, Pueblo, Colorado, 81003-0075, has filed with the Public Utilities Commission of the State of Colorado (“Commission”), in accordance with the Public Utilities Law, an advice letter with revised tariffs to amend its Black Hills Energy Assistance Program (“BHEAP”) rates. The changes to the inputs are found on Tariff Sheet No. 102 in the Rates section of its Colo. P.U.C. No. 11-Electric Tariff. They are to become effective on July 16, 2025. The revised tariffs will affect all retail customers subject to the BHEAP rate if the Commission allows the tariffs to become effective.

Black Hills Energy monitors its BHEAP program on an ongoing basis to ensure that it maintains a sufficient level of funding to meet the growing demand from residential customers for assistance on their monthly electric bills. The Company aims to set its BHEAP rates at a reasonable level to provide requisite support to customers who participate in the Company’s BHEAP program while also minimizing the impact on all customer bills. Demand for energy assistance has recently increased. Black Hills energy, as ordered by the Commission in accordance with its most recent Electric Rate Case, has filed sufficiently address the waitlist for participation in the BHEAP program. To accommodate an increase in participation in the program, Black Hills has filed to increase the BHEAP rate for all customer classes. A summary of changes to the BHEAP funding fee for each customer class is shown in Table 1 below:

Customer Class	Current BHEAP Funding Fee, Per Month	Proposed BHEAP Funding Fee, Per Month
Residential	\$1.00	\$1.45
Small General	\$5.36	\$7.79
Large General	\$138.95	\$201.96
Street/PAL Lighting	\$2.09	\$3.04
Irrigation Service	\$5.17	\$7.51
Large Power	Volumetric rate of \$.001896 per kWh	Volumetric rate of \$.002756 per kWh

The rate adjustment will increase the average residential customer monthly bill by \$0.45 from \$119.26 to \$119.71, or 0.38%. The average small commercial customer monthly bill will increase by \$2.43, from \$396.37 to \$398.80, or 0.61%.

All other customers may call Black Hills Energy at telephone (719) 546-5885 or (719)546-6410 to obtain information concerning how requested tariff amendments may affect them.

Copies of the proposed and present tariffs as filed with the Public Utilities Commission of the State of Colorado are available for inspection at the public offices of Black Hills Energy at 105 South Victoria Avenue, Pueblo, Colorado, 81003; or, at the office of the Public Utilities Commission, 1560 Broadway, Suite 250, Denver, Colorado 80202. Customers with questions concerning the proposed or present tariffs may call the Commission at (303) 894-2000; or, may contact Black Hills Energy by telephone at (888) 890-5554 or by email customerservice@support.blackhillsenergy.com. In addition, the Company’s proposed and present tariffs may be viewed at www.blackhillsenergy.com and the applicable Colorado statutes and Commission rules may be viewed at www.dora.colorado.gov/puc.

Any person may file written comments or objections concerning the filing, with the Colorado Public Utilities Commission, 1560 Broadway, Suite 250, Denver, Colorado, 80202, at the following website: www.dora.state.co.us/pacific/PUC/puccomments. Requests for written notices can also be made to the Commission by telephone at (303) 894-2000 or, alternatively, by contacting the External Affairs section of the Commission at its local number (303) 894-2070 or toll free number (800) 456-0858. The Commission will consider all written comments and objections submitted prior to the evidentiary hearing on the application. Written objections (protests) must be filed at least ten (10) days before the proposed effective date of July 16, 2025. Filing a written objection (protest) by itself will not allow you to participate as a party in any proceeding established in these matters. If you wish to participate as a party in this matter, you must file written intervention documents under Commission Rule 723-1-1401, 4 Colorado Code of Regulations 723-1.

The rates, rules, and regulations ultimately authorized by the Commission may or may not be the same as those proposed and may include rates higher or lower than those proposed or currently in effect.

The Commission may suspend the proposed tariffs, rates, rules, or regulations. The Commission may hold a hearing to determine which rates, rules, and regulations will be authorized. If a hearing is held, any member of the public may attend the hearing and may make a statement under oath about the proposed tariffs, whether or not he or she has filed an objection or intervention. If the filing is uncontested or unopposed, the Commission may determine the matter without a hearing and without further notice.

By: Jennifer Bass
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