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UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-K

(MARK ONE)

ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE
SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2001
OR

TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE
SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

FOR THE TRANSITION PERIOD FROM TO

COMMISSION FILE NUMBER -

CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.
(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Texas
(State or other jurisdiction of
incorporation or organization)

74-0694415
(I.R.S. Employer
Identification Number)

1111 LOUISIANA
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77002
(Address and zip code of
principal executive offices)

(713) 207-3000
(Registrant's telephone number,
including area code)

SECURITIES REGISTERED PURSUANT TO SECTION 12(b) OF THE ACT: None

SECURITIES REGISTERED PURSUANT TO SECTION 12(g) OF THE ACT: None

CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC. MEETS THE CONDITIONS SET FORTH IN GENERAL INSTRUCTION
I(1)(a) AND (b) OF FORM 10-K AND IS THEREFORE FILING THIS FORM 10-K WITH THE
REDUCED DISCLOSURE FORMAT.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant: (1) has filed all reports
required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of
1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the
registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such
filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes No

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item
405 of Regulation S-K is not contained herein and will not be contained, to the
best of the registrants' knowledge, in definitive proxy or information
statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any
amendment to this Form 10-K.

As of March 31, 2002, all 1,000 outstanding shares of CenterPoint Energy,
Inc.'s common stock were held by Reliant Energy, Incorporated.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I

Item 1.	Business.....	1
Item 2.	Properties.....	1
Item 3.	Legal Proceedings.....	1
Item 4.	Submission of Matters to a Vote of Security Holders.....	2

PART II

Item 5.	Market for CenterPoint Energy's Common Equity and Related Stockholder Matters.....	2
Item 6.	Selected Financial Data.....	3
Item 7.	Management's Narrative Analysis of the Results of Operations of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. and its Consolidated Subsidiaries.....	3
Item 7A.	Quantitative and Qualitative Disclosures About Market Risk.....	3
Item 8.	Financial Statements and Supplementary Data of CenterPoint Energy, Inc.....	4
Item 9.	Changes in and Disagreements with Accountants on Accounting and Financial Disclosure.....	7

PART III

Item 10.	Directors and Executive Officers of CenterPoint Energy.....	7
Item 11.	Executive Compensation.....	7
Item 12.	Security Ownership of Certain Beneficial Owners and Management.....	7
Item 13.	Certain Relationships and Related Transactions.....	7

PART IV

Item 14.	Exhibits, Financial Statement Schedules and Reports on Form 8-K.....	7
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PART I

ITEM 1. BUSINESS.

GENERAL

CenterPoint Energy, Inc., a Texas corporation and a wholly owned subsidiary of Reliant Energy, Incorporated (Reliant Energy), was incorporated in August 2001 to become the holding company for Reliant Energy and its subsidiaries following the Restructuring, as defined below. Reliant Energy is a utility holding company that conducts electric utility operations in Texas, as well as non-utility wholesale and retail energy operations. CenterPoint Energy, Inc., which is referred to in this Form 10-K as "CenterPoint Energy," "we," "us," "our" or other similar terms, does not currently conduct any operations. CenterPoint Energy's executive offices are located at 1111 Louisiana, Houston, TX 77002 (telephone number 713-207-3000).

Since its incorporation, CenterPoint Energy has had no business operations and no shareholders other than Reliant Energy. CenterPoint Energy is filing this Form 10-K to satisfy the requirements of Section 15(d) under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended.

BUSINESS SEPARATION AND HOLDING COMPANY RESTRUCTURING

In June 1999, the Texas Electric Choice Plan was signed into law. The law requires, among other things, the separation of the generation, transmission and distribution and retail functions of electric utilities in Texas into three different units. In order to comply with the law, Reliant Energy proposed, and the Public Utility Commission of Texas approved, a business separation plan providing for the separation of Reliant Energy's regulated and unregulated businesses into two publicly traded companies.

Reliant Energy is in the process implementing its business separation plan. In December 2000, Reliant Energy transferred a significant portion of its unregulated businesses to Reliant Resources, Inc. (Reliant Resources), a Delaware corporation which, at the time, was a wholly owned subsidiary of Reliant Energy. Reliant Resources conducted an initial public offering of approximately 20% of its common stock in May 2001. In December 2001, Reliant Energy's shareholders approved an agreement and plan of merger by which:

- o CenterPoint Energy will become the holding company for Reliant Energy and its subsidiaries,
- o Reliant Energy and its subsidiaries will become CenterPoint Energy's subsidiaries, and
- o each share of Reliant Energy common stock will be converted into one share of CenterPoint Energy common stock (Restructuring).

Immediately after the Restructuring, CenterPoint Energy's financial statements and other information will be substantially similar to that of Reliant Energy immediately prior to the Restructuring.

Reliant Energy currently plans to complete the separation of its regulated and unregulated businesses by distributing the remaining equity interest in the common stock of Reliant Resources then owned by CenterPoint Energy to the shareholders of CenterPoint Energy (Distribution). The plan is to complete the Restructuring and subsequent Distribution as quickly as possible after all the necessary conditions are fulfilled, including receipt of a favorable order from the SEC granting CenterPoint Energy an exemption from regulation as a holding company under the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935 and an extension from the IRS for a private letter ruling Reliant Energy obtained regarding the tax-free treatment of the Distribution. Reliant Energy currently expects to complete the Restructuring and Distribution in the summer of 2002.

ITEM 2. PROPERTIES.

CenterPoint Energy does not own any physical properties.

ITEM 3. LEGAL PROCEEDINGS.

None.

ITEM 4. SUBMISSION OF MATTERS TO A VOTE OF SECURITY HOLDERS.

The information called for by Item 4 is omitted pursuant to Instruction I(2)(c) to Form 10-K (Omission of Information by Certain Wholly Owned Subsidiaries).

PART II

ITEM 5. MARKET FOR CENTERPOINT ENERGY'S COMMON EQUITY AND RELATED STOCKHOLDER MATTERS.

All of the 1,000 outstanding shares of CenterPoint Energy's common stock are held by Reliant Energy.

After the consummation of the Restructuring, the declaration and payment of future dividends by CenterPoint Energy will be at the discretion of its board of directors. Since CenterPoint Energy will not directly conduct any business operations from which it will derive revenues, the payment and rate of future dividends on CenterPoint Energy common stock will depend primarily upon the earnings, financial condition and capital requirements of its subsidiaries. Following the Distribution, CenterPoint Energy will not be as large a company as Reliant Energy is today, and the earnings of the subsidiaries and assets that were transferred to Reliant Resources will not be available for the payment of dividends on the CenterPoint Energy common stock. As a result, the cash dividends per share of CenterPoint Energy common stock are expected to be reduced from those of Reliant Energy prior to the Distribution to a level that is consistent with both its earnings profile and the level of cash dividends of other predominately regulated utility businesses.

Subject to the availability of earnings, the needs of its businesses, and other applicable restrictions, Reliant Energy and certain of its former subsidiaries intend to make regular cash payments to CenterPoint Energy after the Restructuring in the form of dividends or distributions on their stock or membership interest in amounts which would be sufficient to pay cash dividends on CenterPoint Energy common stock as described above and to pay operating expenses of CenterPoint Energy and for other purposes as the board of directors of CenterPoint Energy may determine. CenterPoint Energy expects that cash dividends will be declared and paid on approximately the same schedule of dates as that now followed by Reliant Energy with respect to Reliant Energy common stock dividends.

ITEM 6. SELECTED FINANCIAL DATA.

The information called for by Item 6 is omitted pursuant to Instruction I(2)(a) to Form 10-K (Omission of Information by Certain Wholly Owned Subsidiaries).

ITEM 7. MANAGEMENT'S NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS OF OPERATIONS OF CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC. AND ITS CONSOLIDATED SUBSIDIARIES.

CenterPoint Energy was incorporated in August 2001 as a wholly owned subsidiary of Reliant Energy. It is currently anticipated that, upon receipt of necessary regulatory approvals, CenterPoint Energy will become the holding company for Reliant Energy and its subsidiaries. On September 17, 2001, CenterPoint Energy filed a registration statement on Form S-4 (Registration No. 333-69502) with the SEC, which included a proxy statement seeking the approval of Reliant Energy's shareholders of the agreement and plan of merger by which CenterPoint Energy will become the holding company. Reliant Energy's shareholders approved the Merger Agreement on December 17, 2001.

CenterPoint Energy has conducted no business operations and has had no shareholder other than Reliant Energy since its incorporation.

ITEM 7A. QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DISCLOSURES ABOUT MARKET RISK.

Not applicable.

ITEM 8. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND SUPPLEMENTARY DATA OF CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.

CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC. AND SUBSIDIARIES
 CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET
 DECEMBER 31, 2001

ASSETS

Cash	\$ 3,000
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 3,000
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LIABILITIES AND STOCKHOLDER'S EQUITY

STOCKHOLDER'S EQUITY:	
Preferred stock, no par value, 20,000,000 shares authorized, none issued and outstanding ..	\$ --
Common stock, no par value, 1,000,000,000 shares authorized, 1,000 shares issued and outstanding	3,000
TOTAL STOCKHOLDER'S EQUITY	3,000
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND STOCKHOLDER'S EQUITY	\$ 3,000
	=====

See Notes to the Company's Consolidated Balance Sheet

CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC. AND SUBSIDIARIES

NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET

(1) BASIS OF PRESENTATION

On August 31, 2001, Reliant Energy, Incorporated (Reliant Energy) formed a new corporation, Reliant Energy Regco, Inc., a Texas corporation, to become its holding company. Reliant Energy Regco, Inc. is a direct wholly owned subsidiary of Reliant Energy. On September 10, 2001, Reliant Energy Regco, Inc. formed a new wholly owned Delaware limited liability company subsidiary named Utility Holding, LLC. On September 12, 2001, Utility Holding, LLC formed a new wholly owned Texas corporate subsidiary named Reliant Energy MergerCo, Inc. (MergerCo). To effect the holding company structure, Reliant Energy will merge with MergerCo (Merger). On October 9, 2001, Reliant Energy Regco, Inc.'s corporate charter was amended to change its corporate name to CenterPoint Energy, Inc. CenterPoint Energy, Inc. has 1,020,000,000 authorized shares of capital stock, comprised of 1,000,000,000 shares of no par value common stock and 20,000,000 shares of no par value preferred stock.

The Merger is the mechanical step necessary for Reliant Energy to become a subsidiary of the new holding company in order to comply with regulatory legislation related to the deregulation of the Texas electric industry. Upon completion of the Merger, which is expected to occur in the summer of 2002, Reliant Energy and Reliant Energy's subsidiaries will be indirect subsidiaries of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. CenterPoint Energy, Inc. has not, to date, conducted any activities other than those incident to its formation and the matters contemplated by the merger agreement. Accordingly, statements of consolidated operations, stockholder's equity and cash flows would not provide meaningful information and have been omitted. Upon the consummation of the Merger, CenterPoint Energy, Inc. will adopt the accounting policies of Reliant Energy.

(2) SUBSEQUENT EVENT

Effective March 27, 2002, the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. were amended to change the par value of the common stock and the preferred stock to \$.01 par value per share.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Stockholder of
CenterPoint Energy, Inc.
Houston, Texas

We have audited the accompanying consolidated balance sheet of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. and its subsidiaries (the Company), a wholly owned subsidiary of Reliant Energy, Incorporated as of December 31, 2001. This financial statement is the responsibility of the Company's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on this financial statement based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the consolidated balance sheet is free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the consolidated balance sheet. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall balance sheet presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the consolidated balance sheet presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Company as of December 31, 2001, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

DELOITTE & TOUCHE LLP

Houston, Texas
March 28, 2002

ITEM 9. CHANGES IN AND DISAGREEMENTS WITH ACCOUNTANTS ON ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE.

None.

PART III

ITEM 10. DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF CENTERPOINT ENERGY.

The information called for by Item 10 is omitted pursuant to Instruction I(2)(c) to Form 10-K (Omission of Information by Certain Wholly Owned Subsidiaries).

ITEM 11. EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION.

The information called for by Item 11 is omitted pursuant to Instruction I(2)(c) to Form 10-K (Omission of Information by Certain Wholly Owned Subsidiaries).

ITEM 12. SECURITY OWNERSHIP OF CERTAIN BENEFICIAL OWNERS AND MANAGEMENT.

The information called for by Item 12 is omitted pursuant to Instruction I(2)(c) to Form 10-K (Omission of Information by Certain Wholly Owned Subsidiaries).

ITEM 13. CERTAIN RELATIONSHIPS AND RELATED TRANSACTIONS.

The information called for by Item 13 is omitted pursuant to Instruction I(2)(c) to Form 10-K (Omission of Information by Certain Wholly Owned Subsidiaries).

PART IV

ITEM 14. EXHIBITS, FINANCIAL STATEMENT SCHEDULES AND REPORTS ON FORM 8-K.

(a) The following documents are filed as part of this report.

1. Financial Statements.
Consolidated Balance Sheet
Notes to Consolidated Balance Sheet
Independent Auditors' Report
2. Financial Statement Schedules.

None
3. Exhibits.
See the Index to Exhibits which appears following the signature page to this report.

(b) Reports on Form 8-K.

None.

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized, in the City of Houston, the State of Texas, on the 1st day of April, 2002.

CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.
(Registrant)

By: /s/ R. STEVE LETBETTER

R. Steve Letbetter,
Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, this report has been signed below by the following persons on behalf of the registrant and in the capacities indicated on April 1, 2002.

SIGNATURE
TITLE -----

/s/ R. STEVE
LETBETTER
Chairman,
President,
Chief
Executive
Officer and
Sole - -----

Director
(Principal
Executive
Officer) (R.
Steve
Letbetter)
/s/ STEPHEN
W. NAEVE
Vice
Chairman and
Chief
Financial
Officer - --

(Principal
Financial
Officer)
(Stephen W.
Naeve) /s/
MARY P.
RICCIARDELLO
Senior Vice
President
and Chief
Accounting -

Officer
(Principal
Accounting
Officer)
(Mary P.
Ricciardello)

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION TO BE FURNISHED WITH REPORTS FILED PURSUANT TO SECTION 15(d) OF THE ACT BY REGISTRANTS WHICH HAVE NOT REGISTERED SECURITIES PURSUANT TO SECTION 12 OF THE ACT

No annual report to security holders covering CenterPoint Energy's last fiscal year has been sent to security holders. No proxy statement, form of proxy or other proxy soliciting material has been sent to any CenterPoint Energy security holders with respect to any annual or other meeting of CenterPoint Energy security holders.

CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.

EXHIBITS TO THE ANNUAL REPORT ON FORM 10-K
FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2001

INDEX OF EXHIBITS

Exhibits not incorporated by reference to a prior filing are designated by a cross (+); all exhibits not so designated are incorporated herein by reference to a prior filing as indicated. Exhibits designated by an asterisk (*) are management contracts or compensatory plans or arrangements required to be filed as exhibits to this Form 10-K by Item 601(b)(10)(iii) of Regulation S-K.

SEC FILE OR EXHIBIT REPORT OR REGISTRATION REGISTRATION EXHIBIT NUMBER DESCRIPTION STATEMENT NUMBER REFERENCE - ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- -----	
---	+2 -
	Agreement and Plan of Merger, dated as of October 19, 2001, by and among Reliant Energy , Incorporated, CenterPoint Energy, Inc. and Reliant Energy MergerCo, Inc. 3.1 - Amended and Restated Articles Registration Statement on Form 333- 69502 3.1 of Incorporation of CenterPoint S-4 Energy, Inc. +3.1.1 - Articles of Amendment to Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. +3.2 - Amended and Restated Bylaws of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. +3.3 - Statement of Resolution Establishing Series of Shares

designated
Series A
Preferred
Stock of the
Company. 4.1
- Form of
CenterPoint
Energy,
Registration
Statement on
Form 333-
69502 4.1
Inc. Stock
Certificate
S-4 +4.2 -
Rights
Agreement
dated
January 1,
2002,
between the
Company and
JP Morgan
Chase Bank,
as Rights
Agent. +4.3
-
Contribution
and
Registration
Agreement
dated
December 18,
2001 among
the Company,
CenterPoint
Energy, Inc.
and the
Northern
Trust
Company,
trustee
under the
Reliant
Energy,
Incorporated
Master
Retirement
Trust. +23 -
Consent of
Deloitte &
Touche LLP

AGREEMENT AND PLAN OF MERGER

THIS AGREEMENT AND PLAN OF MERGER ("Agreement") is made as of October 19, 2001, by and among Reliant Energy, Incorporated, a Texas corporation ("REI"), Reliant Energy MergerCo, Inc., a Texas corporation ("MergerCo"), and CenterPoint Energy, Inc., a Texas corporation ("CEP").

WHEREAS, REI has authorized capital consisting of (i) 700,000,000 shares of common stock, without par value ("REI Common Stock"), of which 298,124,743 shares were issued and outstanding as of the date hereof and 4,511,691 shares were held as treasury stock; (ii) 10,000,000 shares of preferred stock, without par value ("REI Preferred Stock"), of which 97,397 shares are issued and outstanding; (iii) 10,000,000 shares of preference stock, without par value ("REI Preference Stock"), of which 50,810 shares (consisting of four separate series) are issued and outstanding; and

WHEREAS, CEP has authorized capital consisting of 1,000,000,000 shares of common stock, without par value ("CEP Common Stock"), of which 1,000 shares are issued and outstanding and are owned beneficially and of record by REI, and 20,000,000 shares of preferred stock, without par value ("CEP Preferred Stock"), of which no shares are issued and outstanding; and

WHEREAS, MergerCo has authorized capital consisting of 1,000 shares of common stock, without par value ("MergerCo Common Stock"), of which 100 shares are issued and outstanding and are owned beneficially and of record by Utility Holding LLC, a Delaware limited liability company and a direct wholly owned subsidiary of CEP ("Utility LLC"); and

WHEREAS, the Boards of Directors of the respective parties hereto deem it advisable and in the best interests of their respective shareholders to merge MergerCo with and into REI with REI being the surviving corporation (the "Merger"), for the purpose and with the effect of establishing CEP as the indirect parent corporation of REI in a transaction intended to qualify for tax-free treatment; and

WHEREAS, REI, CEP and MergerCo desire to make certain covenants and agreements in connection with the Merger and to prescribe various conditions to the Merger; and

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing and the covenants and agreements contained herein, the parties agree as follows:

ARTICLE 1

THE MERGER

1.1 The Merger; Effective Time of the Merger. Upon the terms and subject to the conditions of this Agreement at the Effective Time, MergerCo shall be merged with and into REI in accordance with the Texas Business Corporation Act (the "TBCA"). As soon as practicable at or after the closing of the Merger (the "Closing"), articles of merger, prepared and executed in accordance with the relevant provisions of the TBCA, with respect to the Merger (the "Articles of Merger") shall be filed with the Secretary of State of the State of Texas. The Articles of Merger shall state that the Merger is to become effective immediately upon filing of the Articles of Merger with the Secretary of State of the State of Texas or, if agreed to by REI, CEP and MergerCo, at such time thereafter as is provided in the Articles of Merger. The Merger shall become effective at the time of the issuance of the certificate of merger with respect to the Merger by the Secretary of State of the State of Texas or, if a later effective time was provided in the Articles of Merger, such later time (the "Effective Time").

1.2 Closing. The Closing shall take place at 10:00 a.m. on a date to be specified by the parties, which shall be as soon as practicable after satisfaction (or waiver in accordance with this Agreement) of the latest to occur of the conditions set forth in Article 3 (the "Closing Date"), at the offices of Baker Botts L.L.P., 910 Louisiana, Houston, Texas 77002, unless another date or place is agreed to in writing by the parties.

1.3 Effects of the Merger.

(a) At the Effective Time: (i) MergerCo shall be merged with and into REI, the separate existence of MergerCo shall cease and REI shall continue as the surviving corporation (REI is sometimes referred to herein as the "Surviving Corporation"); (ii) the Articles of Incorporation of REI as in effect immediately prior to the Effective Time shall be the Articles of Incorporation of the Surviving Corporation; and (iii) the Bylaws of REI as in effect immediately prior to the Effective Time shall be the Bylaws of the Surviving Corporation.

(b) The directors and officers of MergerCo at the Effective Time shall, from and after the Effective Time, be the initial directors and officers of the Surviving Corporation and shall serve until their successors have been duly elected or appointed and qualified or until their earlier death, resignation or removal in accordance with the Surviving Corporation's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

(c) The Merger shall have the effects set forth in this Section 1.3 and the applicable provisions of the TBCA.

ARTICLE 2

EFFECT OF THE MERGER ON THE CAPITAL STOCK OF THE CONSTITUENT CORPORATIONS; EXCHANGE OF CERTIFICATES

2.1 Effect of Merger on Capital Stock. At the Effective Time, by virtue of the Merger and without any action on the part of the holder of any shares of capital stock of REI, CEP and MergerCo:

(a) Cancellation of CEP Common Stock. Each share of CEP Common Stock issued and outstanding immediately prior to the Effective Time shall be canceled and retired and shall cease to exist and no consideration shall be delivered or deliverable in exchange therefor.

(b) Exchange of MergerCo Common Stock. Each share of MergerCo Common Stock issued and outstanding immediately prior to the Effective Time shall be automatically converted into one share of common stock, without par value, of the Surviving Corporation.

(c) Exchange of REI Common Stock. Each share of REI Common Stock issued and outstanding immediately prior to the Effective Time shall be automatically converted into one share of CEP Common Stock. Pursuant to a Rights Agreement between CEP and JP Morgan Chase Bank, as Rights Agent (the "CEP Rights Agreement"), each share of CEP Common Stock so issued upon such conversion of REI Common Stock as a result of the Merger shall entitle the holder thereof to associated rights ("CEP Stock Purchase Rights") to purchase one one-thousandth of a share of Series A Preferred Stock, without par value, of CEP ("CEP Series A Preferred Stock"). All references in this Agreement to the CEP Common Stock to be received pursuant to the Merger shall be deemed to include the associated CEP Stock Purchase Rights. The Rights Agreement (the "REI Rights Agreement"), dated as of July 11, 1990 and amended and restated as of August 6, 1997, between REI and Chase Bank of Texas, National Association ("Chase"), as Rights Agent, and the rights issued thereunder associated with the REI Common Stock ("REI Stock Purchase Rights") shall be terminated. All shares of REI Common Stock, when so converted, shall no longer be outstanding and shall automatically be canceled and retired and shall cease to exist, and each holder of a certificate representing any such shares shall cease to have any rights with respect to stock of the Surviving Corporation, and their sole rights shall be with respect to the CEP Common Stock into and for which their shares of REI Common Stock shall have been converted in the Merger.

(d) Treatment of REI Restricted Shares. Each share of REI Common Stock previously awarded as a restricted share award under one of REI's employee benefit plans, whether awarded by stock certificate or by bookkeeping entry, shall automatically and without any action on the part of the holder thereof be converted into one share of CEP Common Stock subject to the same conditions and restrictions as applicable to the restricted share award immediately prior to the Effective Time.

(e) Treatment of REI Stock Options. Each unexpired option to purchase REI Common Stock that is outstanding at the Effective Time (an "REI Stock Option"), whether or not exercisable, shall automatically and without any action on the part of the holder thereof be converted into an option to purchase the number of shares of CEP Common Stock equal to the number of shares of REI Common Stock that could be purchased under such REI Stock Option at a price per share of CEP Common Stock equal to the per share exercise price of such REI Stock Option.

(f) REI Preference Stock Unchanged. Each share of REI Preference Stock issued and outstanding immediately prior to the Effective Time shall not be converted or otherwise affected by the Merger and shall remain outstanding after the Merger.

(g) REI Treasury Stock. Each share of REI Common Stock held by REI in its treasury at the Effective Time, if any, shall be canceled.

2.2 Exchange of REI Common Stock Certificates. Following the Effective Time, each outstanding certificate which, prior to the Effective Time, represented REI Common Stock shall be deemed and treated for all purposes to represent the ownership of the same number of shares of CEP Common Stock as though a surrender or transfer and exchange had taken place. Each holder of an outstanding certificate or certificates which, prior to the Effective Time, represented shares of REI Common Stock may, but shall not be required to, surrender the same to CEP for cancellation or transfer, and each such holder or transferee will be entitled to receive certificates representing the same number of shares of CEP Common Stock as the shares of REI Common Stock previously represented by the stock certificates surrendered. The stock transfer books for the REI Common Stock shall be deemed to be closed at the Effective Time and no transfer of outstanding shares of REI Common Stock shall thereafter be made on such books, but when certificates that formerly represented shares of REI Common Stock are duly presented to CEP or its transfer agent for exchange or transfer, CEP will cause to be issued in respect thereof certificates representing an equal number of shares of CEP Common Stock.

ARTICLE 3

CONDITIONS TO THE MERGER

Completion of the Merger is subject to the satisfaction of the following conditions:

3.1 Shareholder Approval. This Agreement and the transactions provided for herein shall have been approved by holders of common stock of each of REI and MergerCo as and to the extent required by their respective Articles of Incorporation and the TBCA.

3.2 CEP Common Stock Listed. The CEP Common Stock to be issued and to be reserved for issuance pursuant to the Merger, together with the related CEP Stock Purchase Rights, shall have been approved for listing, upon official notice of issuance, by the New York Stock Exchange and the Chicago Stock Exchange.

3.3 Tax Opinion. There shall have been delivered an opinion of tax counsel to the effect that none of CEP, REI and the holders of REI Common Stock will recognize taxable gain or loss as a result of the consummation of the Merger.

3.4 Regulatory Approvals. All authorizations by and approvals of any governmental or public authority or agency deemed necessary or advisable by the Board of Directors of REI in connection with the Merger and other related transactions shall have been obtained, shall be in full force and effect, shall not have been revoked and shall be legally sufficient to authorize the transactions contemplated by this Agreement.

3.5 Other Approvals or Waivers. All third party consents or waivers deemed necessary or advisable by the Board of Directors of REI in connection with the Merger and other related transactions shall have been obtained.

3.6 Redemption of REI Preferred Stock. REI will have redeemed the 97,397 outstanding shares of REI Preferred Stock.

3.7 Registration Statement. A registration statement under the Securities Act of 1933 relating to the CEP Common Stock to be issued and reserved for issuance in connection with the Merger shall have become effective and shall not be the subject of any stop order or proceedings seeking a stop order.

3.8 IRS Rulings. REI will have received favorable rulings from the IRS to the effect that: (a) CEP's proposed distribution (the "Distribution") of the stock of Reliant Resources, Inc. currently owned by REI will be tax free to CEP and its shareholders and (b) the formation of the holding company and the Distribution will not negatively impact the tax treatment of REI's nuclear decommissioning trust.

ARTICLE 4

AMENDMENT AND TERMINATION

4.1 Amendment. REI and CEP, by mutual consent of their respective Boards of Directors, may amend, modify or supplement this Agreement in such manner as may be agreed upon by them in writing at any time before or after approval of this Agreement by the holders of REI Common Stock (as provided in Section 3.1 above); provided, however, that no such amendment, modification or supplement shall, if agreed to after such approval by the holders of REI Common Stock, materially and adversely affect the rights of the holders of REI Common Stock.

4.2 Termination. This Agreement may be terminated and the Merger and other transactions provided for by this Agreement may be abandoned at any time, whether before or after approval of this Agreement by the holders of REI Common Stock, by action of the Board of Directors of REI if such Board of Directors determines for any reason that the completion of the transactions provided for herein would for any reason be inadvisable or not in the best interests of REI or its shareholders. The parties hereto, and any officers or directors thereof, shall not have liability to any person, including, without limitation, any shareholder of REI, in the event of such termination.

ARTICLE 5

ADDITIONAL AGREEMENTS

5.1 Assumption of Plans.

(a) Investors Choice Plan. At the Effective Time, CEP will succeed to and assume responsibility for the Investor's Choice Plan.

(b) Stock Based Employee Benefit Plans. At the Effective Time, CEP will succeed to and assume responsibility for the Reliant Energy, Incorporated Savings Plan, the Houston Industries Incorporated Long-Term Incentive Compensation Plan, the 1994 Houston Industries Incorporated Long-Term Incentive Compensation Plan, the Long Term Incentive Plan of Reliant Energy, Incorporated, the Reliant Energy, Incorporated Business Unit Performance Share Plan, the Reliant Energy, Incorporated and Subsidiaries Common Stock Participation Plan for Designated New Employees and Non-Officer Employees, the NorAm Energy Corp. 1994 Incentive Equity Plan, the Reliant Energy, Incorporated Supplemental Stock Plan for Outside Directors, the Houston Industries Incorporated Stock Benefit Plan and the Houston Industries Incorporated Stock Plan for Outside Directors, (collectively referred to as the "Stock Based Plans"); and, by virtue of the Merger and without any action on the part of the holder thereof, each right or option under the Stock Based Plans to purchase or receive shares of REI Common Stock granted and outstanding immediately prior to the Effective Time shall be converted into and become a right or option to purchase or receive an equivalent number of shares of CEP Common Stock at the same price per share, and/or upon the same terms and subject to the same conditions and restrictions, as applicable, immediately prior to the Effective Time under the relevant right or option.

CEP will reserve, for purposes of the Stock Based Plans, a number of shares of CEP Common Stock equivalent to the number of shares of REI Common Stock reserved by REI for such purposes immediately prior to the Effective Time.

(c) Other Benefit Plans. At the Effective Time, CEP will succeed to and assume responsibility for all other benefit- and employment-related plans, programs, contracts and agreements maintained by REI as in effect immediately prior to the Effective Time.

5.2 Assumption of Indebtedness. As of the Effective Time:

(a) CEP and REI will execute and deliver assumption agreements pursuant to which CEP will expressly assume all of REI's obligations under REI's installment payment obligations relating to approximately \$1.4 billion of Pollution Control Bonds issued by various governmental authorities on behalf of REI, and

(b) CEP, REI and the Trustees under (i) the Subordinated Indenture dated as of September 1, 1999, between REI and Chase, as Trustee, (ii) the Indenture dated as of April 1, 1991, between Houston Industries Incorporated and The Bank of New York Trust Company of Florida, as Trustee, (iii) the Collateral Trust Indenture dated September 1, 1988, between REI (formerly known as Houston Lighting & Power Company ("HL&P")) and Chase (as successor to Texas Commerce Bank, National Association), as Trustee, (iv) the Junior Subordinated Indenture dated as of February 15, 1999, between REI and The Bank of New York, as Trustee, and (v) the Junior Subordinated Indenture dated February 1, 1997 between REI (formerly known as HL&P) and The Bank of New York, as Trustee, will execute and deliver supplemental indentures pursuant to which CEP will expressly assume all of REI's obligations under, and will become the primary obligor with respect to (i) \$1 billion 2.0% Zero-Premium Exchangeable Subordinated Notes due 2029, (ii) \$100 million of Debentures with an interest rate of 7.875%, (iii) \$250 million of Medium-Term Notes with interest rates ranging from 6.5% to 8.15%, (iv) the Junior Subordinated Debentures related to and REI's guarantees of \$375 million of 7.20% trust preferred securities issued by REI Trust I, \$250 million of 8.125% trust preferred securities issued by HL&P Capital Trust I and \$100 million of 8.257% capital securities issued by HL&P Capital Trust II.

5.3 Preferred Share Purchase Rights.

(a) Amendment of REI Rights Agreement. Prior to the Effective Time, REI will enter into an amendment to the REI Rights Agreement to preclude the Merger from triggering a distribution of rights under the REI Rights Agreement and provide that the REI Stock Purchase Rights shall expire upon the consummation of the Merger.

(b) Adoption of CEP Rights Agreement. Prior to the Effective Time, CEP will adopt the CEP Rights Agreement, which will be substantially similar in form and substance to the REI Rights Agreement.

(c) Capitalization. Prior to the Effective Time, CEP will designate shares of CEP Series A Preferred Stock having terms and provisions substantially similar to, and a number of shares identical to, those of REI's Series A Preference Stock.

5.4 Election of Directors. Effective immediately prior to the Effective Time, REI, in its capacity as the sole shareholder of CEP, will elect each person who is then a member of the board of directors of REI as a director of CEP (and to be the only directors of CEP) in the classes indicated below, each of whom

shall serve until the annual meeting of shareholders of CEP at which his or her term expires and until his successor shall have been elected and qualified:

CLASS I
James A. Baker, III
Richard E. Balzhiser, Ph.D.
O. Holcombe Crosswell

CLASS III
Milton Carroll
John T. Cater
R. Steve Letbetter

CLASS II
Robert J. Cruikshank
T. Milton Honea
Laree E. Perez

5.5 Listing of CEP Common Stock. CEP will use its best efforts to obtain, at or before the Effective Time, authorization to list, upon official notice of issuance, on the New York Stock Exchange and the Chicago Stock Exchange the CEP Common Stock issuable pursuant to the Merger together with the related CEP Stock Purchase Rights.

5.6 Redemption of REI Preferred Stock. Prior to the Effective Time, REI will redeem the 97,397 outstanding shares of REI Preferred Stock at a redemption price of approximately \$10,226,685 plus accrued and unpaid dividends to the date fixed for redemption.

5.7 Conversion. Immediately after the Effective Time, REI will use its best efforts to convert to a limited liability company under Texas law.

5.8 Contribution of Treasury Stock. Immediately prior to the Effective Time, REI will contribute to the capital of CEP all of the shares of REI Common Stock held by REI in its treasury, if any.

5.9 Approval of MergerCo Shareholder. CEP covenants and agrees that it will, as the sole member of Utility LLC, cause Utility LLC, as the sole shareholder of MergerCo, to vote all shares of common stock of MergerCo owned by Utility LLC to approve this Agreement.

ARTICLE 6

MISCELLANEOUS

6.1 Governing Law. This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Texas.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, REI, CEP and MergerCo have each caused this Agreement and Plan of Merger to be executed by their respective officers thereunto authorized, all as of the date first written above.

RELIANT ENERGY, INCORPORATED,
a Texas corporation

By: /s/ R. STEVE LETBETTER

Name: R. Steve Letbetter
Its: Chairman, President and
Chief Executive Officer

RELIANT ENERGY MERGERCO, INC.,
a Texas corporation

By: /s/ R. STEVE LETBETTER

Name: R. Steve Letbetter
Its: President and Chief
Executive Officer

CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.,
a Texas corporation

By: /s/ DAVID M. MCCLANAHAN

Name: David M. McClanahan
Its: Vice Chairman

ARTICLES OF AMENDMENT
TO THE
AMENDED AND RESTATED ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
OF
CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.

Pursuant to and in accordance with the provisions of Article 4.04 of the Texas Business Corporation Act, CenterPoint Energy, Inc., a Texas corporation (the "Corporation"), hereby adopts the following Articles of Amendment (the "Articles of Amendment") to its Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation (as amended prior to the date hereof, the "Articles of Incorporation"):

ARTICLE I

The name of the Corporation is CenterPoint Energy, Inc.

ARTICLE II

The following amendment to the Articles of Incorporation (the "Amendment"), which solely effects changes in the par value of the Corporation's common stock and preferred stock, was duly adopted by the sole shareholder of the Corporation on the 26th day of March, 2002:

The Articles of Incorporation are hereby amended by deleting the first paragraph of ARTICLE VI and replacing in lieu thereof a new paragraph reading in its entirety as follows:

"The number of shares of the total authorized capital stock of the corporation is 1,020,000,000 shares, of which 20,000,000 shares are classified as Preferred Stock, par value \$0.01 per share, and the balance of 1,000,000,000 shares are classified as Common Stock, par value \$0.01 per share."

ARTICLE III

The number of shares of the Corporation outstanding at the time of the adoption of the Amendment was 1,000 shares of common stock, without par value ("Common Stock"), all of which were entitled to vote on the Amendment.

ARTICLE VI

The holder of all of the shares of Common Stock has signed a written consent approving the Amendment.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Corporation has caused these Articles of Amendment to be duly executed as of the 27th day of March, 2002.

CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.

By: /s/ Richard B. Dauphin

Name: Richard B. Dauphin
Title: Assistant Corporate Secretary

AMENDED AND RESTATED BYLAWS

OF

CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.

(Adopted and Amended by Resolution of the Board of Directors on
March 26, 2002)

ARTICLE I

CAPITAL STOCK

SECTION 1. Share Ownership. Shares for the capital stock of the Company may be certificated or uncertificated. Owners of shares of the capital stock of the Company shall be recorded in the share transfer records of the Company and ownership of such shares shall be evidenced by a certificate or book entry notation in the share transfer records of the Company. Any certificates representing such shares shall be signed by the Chairman of the Board, if there is one, the Chief Executive Officer, if there is one, the President or a Vice President and either the Secretary or an Assistant Secretary and shall be sealed with the seal of the Company, which signatures and seal may be facsimiles. In case any officer who has signed or whose facsimile signature has been placed upon such certificate shall have ceased to be such officer before such certificate is issued, it may be issued by the Company with the same effect as if he were such officer at the date of its issuance.

SECTION 2. Shareholders of Record. The Board of Directors of the Company may appoint one or more transfer agents or registrars of any class of stock of the Company. The Company may be its own transfer agent if so appointed by the Board of Directors. The Company shall be entitled to treat the holder of record of any shares of the Company as the owner thereof for all purposes, and shall not be bound to recognize any equitable or other claim to, or interest in, such shares or any rights deriving from such shares, on the part of any other person, including (but without limitation) a purchaser, assignee or transferee, unless and until such other person becomes the holder of record of such shares, whether or not the Company shall have either actual or constructive notice of the interest of such other person.

SECTION 3. Transfer of Shares. The shares of the capital stock of the Company shall be transferable in the share transfer records of the Company by the holder of record thereof, or his duly authorized attorney or legal representative. All certificates representing shares surrendered for transfer, properly endorsed, shall be canceled and new certificates for a like number of shares shall be issued therefor. In the case of lost, stolen, destroyed or mutilated certificates representing shares for which the Company has been requested to issue new certificates, new certificates or other evidence of such new shares may be issued upon such conditions as may be required by the Board of Directors or the Secretary for the protection of the Company and any transfer agent or registrar. Uncertificated shares shall be transferred in the

share transfer records of the Company upon the written instruction originated by the appropriate person to transfer the shares.

SECTION 4. Shareholders of Record and Fixing of Record Date. For the purpose of determining shareholders entitled to notice of or to vote at any meeting of shareholders or any adjournment thereof, or entitled to receive a distribution by the Company (other than a distribution involving a purchase or redemption by the Company of any of its own shares) or a share dividend, or in order to make a determination of shareholders for any other proper purpose (other than determining shareholders entitled to consent to action by shareholders proposed to be taken without a meeting of shareholders), the Board of Directors may provide that the share transfer records shall be closed for a stated period of not more than 60 days, and in the case of a meeting of shareholders not less than ten days, immediately preceding the meeting, or it may fix in advance a record date for any such determination of shareholders, such date to be not more than 60 days, and in the case of a meeting of shareholders not less than ten days, prior to the date on which the particular action requiring such determination of shareholders is to be taken. If the share transfer records are not closed and no record date is fixed for the determination of shareholders entitled to notice of or to vote at a meeting of shareholders, or shareholders entitled to receive a distribution (other than a distribution involving a purchase or redemption by the Company of any of its own shares) or a share dividend, the date on which notice of the meeting is mailed or the date on which the resolution of the Board of Directors declaring such distribution or share dividend is adopted, as the case may be, shall be the record date for such determination of shareholders. When a determination of shareholders entitled to vote at any meeting of shareholders has been made as herein provided, such determination shall apply to any adjournment thereof except where the determination has been made through the closing of the share transfer records and the stated period of closing has expired.

ARTICLE II

MEETINGS OF SHAREHOLDERS

SECTION 1. Place of Meetings. All meetings of shareholders shall be held at the registered office of the Company, in the City of Houston, Texas, or at such other place within or without the State of Texas as may be designated by the Board of Directors or officer calling the meeting.

SECTION 2. Annual Meeting. The annual meeting of the shareholders shall be held on such date and at such time as shall be designated from time to time by the Board of Directors or as may otherwise be stated in the notice of the meeting. Failure to designate a time for the annual meeting or to hold the annual meeting at the designated time shall not work a dissolution of the Company.

SECTION 3. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the shareholders may be called by the Chairman of the Board, if there is one, the Chief Executive Officer, if there is one, the President, the Secretary or the Board of Directors. Special meetings of shareholders shall be called by the President or the Secretary of the Company on the written request of the holders of shares of capital stock of the Company constituting at least the percentage of outstanding shares of capital stock of the Company entitled to vote at such meeting that the Articles of Incorporation

(as Section 4 of this Article II defines that term) specify as the minimum percentage necessary to call a special meeting of the shareholders (or in the absence of such specification, the minimum percentage necessary to call a special meeting that the Texas Business Corporation Act, as amended (the "TBCA"), specifies). Such request shall (a) state the purpose or purposes of that meeting and the matters proposed to be acted on at that meeting, (b) the name and address, as they appear on the Company's books and records, of the shareholder proposing such business, (c) evidence reasonably satisfactory to the Secretary of the Company, of such shareholder's status as such and of the number of shares of each class of capital stock of the Company of which such shareholder is the beneficial owner, (d) a description of all arrangements or understandings between such shareholder and any other person or persons (including their names) in connection with the proposal of such business by such shareholder and any material interest of such shareholder in such business and (e) a representation that such shareholder intends to appear in person or by proxy at the special meeting to bring such business before the meeting. Upon receipt of such request and any related notice required by these Bylaws, the Board of Directors shall set a date for the special meeting, set a record date in accordance with Section 4 of Article I, and shall cause an appropriate officer of the Company to give the notice required under Section 4 of this Article II. This Section 3 shall be subject to the rights, if any, of holders of any class or series of capital stock of the Company to call special meetings.

SECTION 4. Notice of Meeting. Written or printed notice of all meetings stating the place, day and hour of the meeting and, in case of a special meeting, the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is called (which may include, in the case of any special meeting called at the written request of shareholders pursuant to the provisions of Section 3 of this Article II, any purpose or purposes (in addition to the purpose or purposes stated by the requesting shareholders pursuant to Section 3 of this Article II) as the Board of Directors may determine), shall be delivered not less than ten nor more than 60 days before the date of the meeting, either personally or by mail, by or at the direction of the Chairman of the Board, if there is one, the Chief Executive Officer, if there is one, the President, the Secretary or the officer or person calling the meeting to each shareholder of record entitled to vote at such meetings. If mailed, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered when deposited in the United States mail addressed to the shareholder at his address as it appears on the share transfer records of the Company, with postage thereon prepaid.

Any notice required to be given to any shareholder, under any provision of the TBCA, the Articles of Incorporation of the Company (as amended from time to time and including each statement respecting any class or series of preferred stock of the Company which has been filed by the Company in accordance with the provisions of Article 2.13 of the TBCA, the "Articles of Incorporation") or these Bylaws, need not be given to a shareholder if notice of two consecutive annual meetings and all notices of meetings held during the period between those annual meetings, if any, or all (but in no event less than two) payments (if sent by first class mail) of distributions or interest on securities during a 12-month period have been mailed to that person, addressed at his address as shown on the share transfer records of the Company, and have been returned undeliverable. Any action or meeting taken or held without notice to such person shall have the same force and effect as if the notice had been duly given. If such a person delivers to the Company a written notice setting forth his then current address, the requirement that notice be given to that person shall be reinstated.

SECTION 5. Voting List. The officer or agent having charge of the share transfer records for shares of the Company shall make, at least ten days before each meeting of shareholders, a complete list of the shareholders entitled to vote at such meeting or any adjournment thereof, arranged in alphabetical order, with the address of and the number of shares held by each, which list, for a period of ten days prior to such meeting, shall be kept on file at the registered office of the Company and shall be subject to inspection by any shareholder at any time during usual business hours. Such list shall also be produced and kept open at the time and place of the meeting and shall be subject to the inspection of any shareholder during the whole time of the meeting. The original share transfer records shall be prima facie evidence as to who are the shareholders entitled to examine such list or to vote at any meeting of shareholders. Failure to comply with any requirements of this Section 5 shall not affect the validity of any action taken at such meeting.

SECTION 6. Voting; Proxies. Except as otherwise provided in the Articles of Incorporation or as otherwise provided in the TBCA, each holder of shares of capital stock of the Company entitled to vote shall be entitled to one vote for each share standing in his name on the records of the Company, either in person or by proxy executed in writing by him or by his duly authorized attorney-in-fact. A proxy shall be revocable unless expressly provided therein to be irrevocable and the proxy is coupled with an interest. At each election of directors, every holder of shares of the Company entitled to vote shall have the right to vote, in person or by proxy, the number of shares owned by him for as many persons as there are directors to be elected, and for whose election he has a right to vote, but in no event shall he be permitted to cumulate his votes for one or more directors.

SECTION 7. Quorum and Vote of Shareholders. Except as otherwise provided by law, the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws, the holders of a majority of shares entitled to vote, represented in person or by proxy, shall constitute a quorum at a meeting of shareholders, but, if a quorum is not represented, a majority in interest of those represented may adjourn the meeting from time to time. Directors shall be elected by a plurality of the votes cast by the holders of shares entitled to vote in the election of directors at a meeting of shareholders at which a quorum is present. With respect to each matter other than the election of directors as to which no other voting requirement is specified by law, the Articles of Incorporation or in this Section 7 or in Article VII of these Bylaws, the affirmative vote of the holders of a majority of the shares entitled to vote on that matter and represented in person or by proxy at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the shareholders. With respect to a matter submitted to a vote of the shareholders as to which a shareholder approval requirement is applicable under the shareholder approval policy of the New York Stock Exchange, Rule 16b-3 under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act"), or any provision of the Internal Revenue Code, in each case for which no higher voting requirement is specified by law, the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws, the affirmative vote of the holders of a majority of the shares entitled to vote on, and voted for or against, that

matter at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the shareholders, provided that approval of such matter shall also be conditioned on any more restrictive requirement of such shareholder approval policy, Rule 16b-3 or Internal Revenue Code provision, as applicable, being satisfied. With respect to the approval of independent public accountants (if submitted for a vote of the shareholders), the affirmative vote of the holders of a majority of the shares entitled to vote on, and voted for or against, that matter at a meeting of shareholders at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the shareholders.

SECTION 8. Presiding Officer and Conduct of Meetings. The Chairman of the Board, if there is one, or in his absence, the Chief Executive Officer, if there is one, or in his absence, the President shall preside at all meetings of the shareholders or, if such officers are not present at a meeting, by such other person as the Board of Directors shall designate or if no such person is designated by the Board of Directors, the most senior officer of the Company present at the meeting. The Secretary of the Company, if present, shall act as secretary of each meeting of shareholders; if he is not present at a meeting, then such person as may be designated by the presiding officer shall act as secretary of the meeting. Meetings of shareholders shall follow reasonable and fair procedure. Subject to the foregoing, the conduct of any meeting of shareholders and the determination of procedure and rules shall be within the absolute discretion of the officer presiding at such meeting (the "Chairman of the Meeting"), and there shall be no appeal from any ruling of the Chairman of the Meeting with respect to procedure or rules. Accordingly, in any meeting of shareholders or part thereof, the Chairman of the Meeting shall have the sole power to determine appropriate rules or to dispense with theretofore prevailing rules. Without limiting the foregoing, the following rules shall apply:

(a) If disorder should arise which prevents continuation of the legitimate business of meeting, the Chairman of the Meeting may announce the adjournment of the meeting; and upon so doing, the meeting shall be immediately adjourned.

(b) The Chairman of the Meeting may ask or require that anyone not a bona fide shareholder or proxy leave the meeting.

(c) A resolution or motion proposed by a shareholder shall only be considered for vote of the shareholders if it meets the criteria of Article II, Section 9 (Proper Business - Annual Meeting of Shareholders) or Article II, Section 10 (Proper Business - Special Meeting of Shareholders), as the case may be. The Chairman of the Meeting may propose any resolution or motion for vote of the shareholders.

(d) The order of business at all meetings of shareholders shall be determined by the Chairman of the Meeting.

(e) The Chairman of the Meeting may impose any reasonable limits with respect to participation in the meeting by shareholders, including, but not limited to, limits on the amount of time taken up by the remarks or questions of any shareholder, limits on the number of questions per shareholder and limits as to the subject matter and timing of questions and remarks by shareholders.

(f) Before any meeting of shareholders, the Board of Directors may appoint three persons other than nominees for office to act as inspectors of election at the meeting or its adjournment. If no inspectors of election are so appointed, the Chairman of the Meeting may, and on the request of any shareholder or a shareholder's proxy shall, appoint inspectors of election at the meeting of the shareholders and the number of such inspectors shall be three. If any person appointed as inspector fails to appear or fails or

refuses to act, the Chairman of the Meeting may, and upon the request of any shareholder or a shareholder's proxy shall, appoint a person to fill such vacancy.

The duties of the inspectors shall be to:

(i) determine the number of shares outstanding and the voting power of each, the shares represented at the meeting, the existence of a quorum, and the authenticity, validity and effect of proxies and ballots;

(ii) receive votes or ballots;

(iii) hear and determine all challenges and questions in any way arising in connection with the vote;

(iv) count and tabulate all votes;

(v) report to the Board of Directors the results based on the information assembled by the inspectors; and

(vi) do any other acts that may be proper to conduct the election or vote with fairness to all shareholders.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the final certification of the results of the election or other matter acted upon at a meeting of shareholders shall be made by the Board of Directors.

All determinations of the Chairman of the Meeting shall be conclusive unless a matter is determined otherwise upon motion duly adopted by the affirmative vote of the holders of at least 80% of the voting power of the shares of capital stock of the Company entitled to vote in the election of directors held by shareholders present in person or represented by proxy at such meeting.

SECTION 9. Proper Business - Annual Meeting of Shareholders. At any annual meeting of shareholders, only such business shall be conducted as shall be a proper subject for the meeting and shall have been properly brought before the meeting. To be properly brought before an annual meeting of shareholders, business (other than business relating to (i) any nomination or removal of directors, which are governed by Article III, Sections 2 and 8, or (ii) any alteration, amendment or repeal of the Bylaws or any adoption of new Bylaws, which is governed by Article VII hereof) must (a) be specified in the notice of such meeting (or any supplement thereto) given by or at the direction of the Board of Directors (or any duly authorized committee thereof), (b) otherwise be properly brought before the meeting by or at the direction of the Chairman of the Meeting or the Board of Directors (or any duly authorized committee thereof) or (c) otherwise (i) be properly requested to be brought before the meeting by a shareholder of record entitled to vote in the election of directors generally, in compliance with the provisions of this Section 9 and (ii) constitute a proper subject to be brought before such meeting. For business to be properly brought before an annual meeting of shareholders, any shareholder who intends to bring any matter (other than a matter relating to (i) any nomination or removal of directors, which are governed by Article III, Sections 2 and 8, or (ii) any alteration,

amendment or repeal of the Bylaws or any adoption of new Bylaws, which is governed by Article VII hereof) before an annual meeting of shareholders and is entitled to vote on such matter must deliver written notice of such shareholder's intent to bring such matter before the annual meeting of shareholders, either by personal delivery or by United States mail, postage prepaid, to the Secretary of the Company. Such notice must be received by the Secretary not less than 90 days nor more than 180 days prior to the date on which the immediately preceding year's annual meeting of shareholders was held; provided, however, that if the date of the annual meeting is advanced more than 30 days prior to or delayed by more than 60 days after the anniversary of the preceding year's annual meeting, notice by the shareholder to be timely must be so delivered not earlier than 180 days prior to such annual meeting and not later than the last to occur of the close of business on (i) the 90th day prior to such annual meeting or (ii) the 10th day following the day on which the Company first makes public announcement of the date of such meeting by (A) a mailing to shareholders, (B) a press release or (C) a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "Commission") pursuant to Section 13(a) or 14(a) of the Exchange Act. In no event shall the public disclosure of an adjournment of an annual meeting of shareholders commence a new time period for the giving of a shareholder's notice as described above.

To be in proper written form, a shareholder's notice to the Secretary shall set forth as to each matter the shareholder proposes to bring before the annual meeting of shareholders (a) a brief description of the business desired to be brought before the meeting and the reasons for conducting such business at the meeting, (b) the name and address, as they appear on the Company's books and records, of the shareholder proposing such business, (c) evidence reasonably satisfactory to the Secretary of the Company, of such shareholder's status as such and of the number of shares of each class of capital stock of the Company of which such shareholder is the beneficial owner, (d) a description of all arrangements or understandings between such shareholder and any other person or persons (including their names) in connection with the proposal of such business by such shareholder and any material interest of such shareholder in such business and (e) a representation that such shareholder intends to appear in person or by proxy at the annual meeting to bring such business before the meeting. No business shall be conducted at an annual meeting of shareholders except in accordance with the procedures set forth in this Section 9. Beneficial ownership shall be determined in accordance with Rule 13d-3 under the Exchange Act. When used in these Bylaws, "person" has the meaning ascribed to such term in Section 2(a)(2) of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, as the context may require.

Within 30 days after such shareholder shall have submitted the aforesaid items, the Secretary or the Board of Directors of the Company shall determine whether the proposed business has been properly requested to be brought before the annual meeting of shareholders and shall notify such shareholder in writing of its determination. If such shareholder fails to submit a required item in the form or within the time indicated, or if the Secretary or the Board of Directors of the Company determines that the proposed business otherwise has not been properly requested, then such proposal by such shareholder shall not be voted upon by the shareholders of the Company at such annual meeting of shareholders. The Chairman of the Meeting shall, if the facts warrant, determine and declare to the meeting that a proposal made by a shareholder of the Company pursuant to this Section 9 was not made in accordance with the procedures prescribed by these Bylaws, and if he should so determine, he shall so declare to the meeting and the defective proposal shall be disregarded.

Nothing in this Section 9 shall be interpreted or construed to require the inclusion of information about any such proposal in any proxy statement distributed by, at the direction of, or on behalf of the Board of Directors or the Company.

SECTION 10. Proper Business - Special Meeting of Shareholders. At any special meeting of shareholders, only such business shall be conducted as shall have been stated in the notice of such meeting or shall otherwise have been properly brought before the meeting by or at the direction of the Chairman of the Meeting or the Board of Directors (or any duly authorized committee thereof).

ARTICLE III

DIRECTORS

SECTION 1. Classification of Board of Directors; Qualifications. (a) The business and affairs of the Company shall be managed by the Board of Directors.

Each director elected by the holders of Preferred Stock pursuant to Division A of Article VI of the Articles of Incorporation (or elected by such directors to fill a vacancy) shall serve for a term ending upon the earlier of the election of his successor or the termination at any time of a right of the holders of Preferred Stock to elect members of the Board of Directors.

At each annual election, the directors chosen to succeed those whose terms then expire shall be of the same class as the directors they succeed, unless, by reason of any intervening changes in the authorized number of directors, the Board of Directors shall designate one or more directorships whose term then expires as directorships of another class in order more nearly to achieve equality of number of directors among the classes.

Notwithstanding the rule that the three classes shall be as nearly equal in number of directors as possible, in the event of any change in the authorized number of directors, each director then continuing to serve as such shall nevertheless continue as a director of the class of which he or she is a member until the expiration of his or her current term, or his or her prior death, resignation, disqualification or removal. If any newly created directorship may, consistent with the rule that the three classes shall be as nearly equal in number of directors as possible, be allocated to any of the three classes, the Board of Directors shall allocate it to that available class whose term of office is due to expire at the earliest date following such allocation. No decrease in the number of directors constituting the Board of Directors shall shorten the term of any incumbent director.

(b) No person shall be eligible to serve as a director of the Company subsequent to the annual meeting of shareholders occurring on or after the first day of the month immediately following the month of such person's seventieth birthday. Any vacancy on the Board of Directors resulting from any director being rendered ineligible to serve as a director of the Company by the immediately preceding sentence shall be filled pursuant to the terms of the Articles of Incorporation.

No person shall continue to serve as a member of the Board of Directors if the director ceases for any reason to hold the principal employment or position he or she held at the time first

elected to the Board of Directors and does not secure a comparable employment or position, as determined in the sole judgment of the Board of Directors, within one year thereof.

No person who is also an employee of the Company or one of its corporate affiliates shall continue to serve as a member of the Board of Directors after his or her retirement, termination or downward change in status in the Company, as determined in the sole judgment of the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors may waive any qualification set forth above in this Section 1(b) if it determines that the director has special skill, experience or distinction having value to the Company that is not readily available or transferable. Any such waiver shall be made by a majority of the Board of Directors, excluding the director whose disqualification is being waived.

No person shall be eligible for election or reelection or to continue to serve as a member of the Board of Directors who is an officer, director, agent, representative, partner, employee, or nominee of, or otherwise acting at the direction of, or acting in concert with, (a) a "public-utility company" (other than any direct or indirect subsidiary of the Company) as such term is defined in Section 2(a)(5) of the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935, as in effect on May 1, 1996 (35 Act), or (b) an "affiliate" (as defined in either Section 2(a)(11) of the 35 Act or in Rule 405 under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended) of any such "public-utility company" specified in clause (a) immediately preceding.

Any vacancies on the Board of Directors resulting from the disqualification of a director by virtue of the above qualifications may be filled pursuant to the terms of the Articles of Incorporation.

The above qualifications and limitations notwithstanding, each director shall serve until his successor shall have been duly elected and qualified, unless he or she shall resign, become disqualified, disabled or shall otherwise be removed.

SECTION 2. Nomination of Directors. Nominations for the election of directors may be made by the Board of Directors or by any shareholder (the "Nominator") entitled to vote in the election of directors. Such nominations, other than those made by the Board of Directors, shall be made in writing pursuant to timely notice delivered to or mailed and received by the Secretary of the Company as set forth in this Section 2. To be timely in connection with an annual meeting of shareholders, a Nominator's notice, setting forth the name and address of the person to be nominated, shall be delivered to or mailed and received at the principal executive offices of the Company not less than 90 days nor more than 180 days prior to the date on which the immediately preceding year's annual meeting of shareholders was held; provided, however, that if the date of the annual meeting is advanced more than 30 days prior to or delayed by more than 60 days after the anniversary of the preceding year's annual meeting, notice by the Nominator to be timely must be so delivered not earlier than 180 days prior to such annual meeting and not later than the last to occur of the close of business on (i) the 90th day prior to such annual meeting or (ii) the 10th day following the day on which the Company first makes public announcement of the date of such meeting by (A) a mailing to shareholders, (B) a press release or (C) a filing with the Commission pursuant to Section 13(a) or 14(a) of the Exchange

Act. To be timely in connection with any election of a director at a special meeting of the shareholders, a Nominator's notice, setting forth the name of the person to be nominated, shall be delivered to or mailed and received at the principal executive offices of the Company not less than 40 days nor more than 60 days prior to the date of such meeting; provided, however, that in the event that less than 47 days' notice or prior public disclosure of the date of the special meeting of the shareholders is given or made to the shareholders, the Nominator's notice to be timely must be so received not later than the close of business on the seventh day following the day on which such notice of date of the meeting was mailed or such public disclosure was made. At such time, the Nominator shall also submit written evidence, reasonably satisfactory to the Secretary of the Company, that the Nominator is a shareholder of the Company and shall identify in writing (a) the name and address of the Nominator, (b) the number of shares of each class of capital stock of the Company owned beneficially by the Nominator, (c) the name and address of each of the persons with whom the Nominator is acting in concert, (d) the number of shares of capital stock beneficially owned by each such person with whom the Nominator is acting in concert, and (e) a description of all arrangements or understandings between the Nominator and each nominee and any other persons with whom the Nominator is acting in concert pursuant to which the nomination or nominations are to be made. At such time, the Nominator shall also submit in writing (i) the information with respect to each such proposed nominee that would be required to be provided in a proxy statement prepared in accordance with Regulation 14A under the Exchange Act and (ii) a notarized affidavit executed by each such proposed nominee to the effect that, if elected as a member of the Board of Directors, he will serve and that he is eligible for election as a member of the Board of Directors. Within 30 days (or such shorter time period that may exist prior to the date of the meeting) after the Nominator has submitted the aforesaid items to the Secretary of the Company, the Secretary of the Company shall determine whether the evidence of the Nominator's status as a shareholder submitted by the Nominator is reasonably satisfactory and shall notify the Nominator in writing of his determination. The failure of the Secretary of the Company to find such evidence reasonably satisfactory, or the failure of the Nominator to submit the requisite information in the form or within the time indicated, shall make the person to be nominated ineligible for nomination at the meeting at which such person is proposed to be nominated. The presiding person at each meeting of shareholders shall, if the facts warrant, determine and declare to the meeting that a nomination was not made in accordance with the procedures prescribed by these Bylaws, and if he should so determine, he shall so declare to the meeting and the defective nomination shall be disregarded. Beneficial ownership shall be determined in accordance with Rule 13d-3 under the Exchange Act.

SECTION 3. Place of Meetings and Meetings by Telephone. Meetings of the Board of Directors may be held either within or without the State of Texas, at whatever place is specified by the officer calling the meeting. Meetings of the Board of Directors may also be held by means of conference telephone or similar communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other. Participation in such a meeting by means of conference telephone or similar communications equipment shall constitute presence in person at such meeting, except where a director participates in a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business on the ground that the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. In the absence of specific designation by the officer calling the meeting, the meetings shall be held at the principal office of the Company.

SECTION 4. Regular Meetings. The Board of Directors shall meet each year immediately following the annual meeting of the shareholders for the transaction of such business as may properly be brought before the meeting. The Board of Directors shall also meet regularly at such other times as shall be designated by the Board of Directors. No notice of any kind to either existing or newly elected members of the Board of Directors for such annual or regular meetings shall be necessary.

SECTION 5. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be held at any time upon the call of the Chairman of the Board, if there is one, the Chief Executive Officer, if there is one, the President or the Secretary of the Company or a majority of the directors then in office. Notice shall be sent by mail, facsimile or telegram to the last known address of the director at least two days before the meeting, or oral notice may be substituted for such written notice if received not later than the day preceding such meeting. Notice of the time, place and purpose of such meeting may be waived in writing before or after such meeting, and shall be equivalent to the giving of notice. Attendance of a director at such meeting shall also constitute a waiver of notice thereof, except where he attends for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business on the ground that the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. Except as otherwise provided by these Bylaws, neither the business to be transacted at, nor the purpose of, any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors need be specified in the notice or waiver of notice of such meeting.

SECTION 6. Quorum and Voting. Except as otherwise provided by law, the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws, a majority of the number of directors fixed in the manner provided in these Bylaws as from time to time amended shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Except as otherwise provided by law, the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws, the affirmative vote of a majority of the directors present at any meeting at which there is a quorum shall be the act of the Board of Directors. Any regular or special directors' meeting may be adjourned from time to time by those present, whether a quorum is present or not.

SECTION 7. Compensation. Directors shall receive such compensation for their services as shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

SECTION 8. Removal. No proposal by a shareholder to remove a director of the Company, regardless of whether such director was elected by holders of outstanding shares of Preferred Stock (or elected by the directors to fill a vacancy), shall be voted upon at a meeting of the shareholders unless such shareholder shall have delivered or mailed in a timely manner (as set forth in this Section 8) and in writing to the Secretary of the Company (a) notice of such proposal, (b) a statement of the grounds, if any, on which such director is proposed to be removed, (c) evidence, reasonably satisfactory to the Secretary of the Company, of such shareholder's status as such and of the number of shares of each class of the capital stock of the Company beneficially owned by such shareholder, (d) a list of the names and addresses of other beneficial owners of shares of the capital stock of the Company, if any, with whom such shareholder is acting in concert, and of the number of shares of each class of the capital stock of the Company beneficially owned by each such beneficial owner, and (e) an opinion of counsel, which counsel and the form and substance of which opinion shall be reasonably satisfactory to the Board of Directors of the Company (excluding the director proposed to be removed), to the

effect that, if adopted at a duly called special or annual meeting of the shareholders of the Company by the required vote as set forth in the Articles of Incorporation, such removal would not be in conflict with the laws of the State of Texas, the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws. To be timely in connection with an annual meeting of shareholders, a shareholder's notice and other aforesaid items shall be delivered to or mailed and received at the principal executive offices of the Company not less than 90 days nor more than 180 days prior to the date on which the immediately preceding year's annual meeting of shareholders was held; provided, however, that if the date of the annual meeting is advanced more than 30 days prior to or delayed by more than 60 days after the anniversary of the preceding year's annual meeting, notice by the shareholder to be timely must be so delivered not earlier than 180 days prior to such annual meeting and not later than the last to occur of the close of business on (i) the 90th day prior to such annual meeting or (ii) the 10th day following the day on which the Company first makes public announcement of the date of such meeting by (A) a mailing to shareholders, (B) a press release or (C) a filing with the Commission pursuant to Section 13(a) or 14(a) of the Exchange Act. To be timely in connection with the removal of any director at a special meeting of the shareholders, a shareholder's notice and other aforesaid items shall be delivered to or mailed and received at the principal executive offices of the Company not less than 40 days nor more than 60 days prior to the date of such meeting; provided, however, that in the event that less than 47 days' notice or prior public disclosure of the date of the special meeting of shareholders is given or made to the shareholders, the shareholder's notice and other aforesaid items to be timely must be so received not later than the close of business on the seventh day following the day on which such notice of date of the meeting was mailed or such public disclosure was made. Within 30 days (or such shorter period that may exist prior to the date of the meeting) after such shareholder shall have delivered the aforesaid items to the Secretary of the Company, the Secretary and the Board of Directors of the Company shall respectively determine whether the items to be ruled upon by them are reasonably satisfactory and shall notify such shareholder in writing of their respective determinations. If such shareholder fails to submit a required item in the form or within the time indicated, or if the Secretary or the Board of Directors of the Company determines that the items to be ruled upon by them are not reasonably satisfactory, then such proposal by such shareholder may not be voted upon by the shareholders of the Company at such meeting of shareholders. The presiding person at each meeting of shareholders shall, if the facts warrant, determine and declare to the meeting that a proposal to remove a director of the Company was not made in accordance with the procedures prescribed by these Bylaws, and if he should so determine, he shall so declare to the meeting and the defective proposal shall be disregarded. Beneficial ownership shall be determined as specified in accordance with Rule 13d-3 under the Exchange Act.

SECTION 9. Executive and Other Committees. The Board of Directors, by resolution or resolutions adopted by a majority of the full Board of Directors, may designate one or more members of the Board of Directors to constitute an Executive Committee, and one or more other committees, which shall in each case be comprised of such number of directors as the Board of Directors may determine from time to time. Subject to such restrictions as may be contained in the Articles of Incorporation or that may be imposed by the TBCA, any such committee shall have and may exercise such powers and authority of the Board of Directors in the management of the business and affairs of the Company as the Board of Directors may determine by resolution and specify in the respective resolutions appointing them, or as permitted by applicable law, including, without limitation, the power and authority to (a) authorize a

distribution, (b) authorize the issuance of shares of the Company and (c) exercise the authority of the Board of Directors vested in it pursuant to Article 2.13 of the TBCA or such successor statute as may be in effect from time to time. Each duly-authorized action taken with respect to a given matter by any such duly-appointed committee of the Board of Directors shall have the same force and effect as the action of the full Board of Directors and shall constitute for all purposes the action of the full Board of Directors with respect to such matter.

The designation of any such committee and the delegation thereto of authority shall not operate to relieve the Board of Directors, or any member thereof, of any responsibility imposed upon it or him by law, nor shall such committee function where action of the Board of Directors cannot be delegated to a committee thereof under applicable law. The Board of Directors shall have the power at any time to change the membership of any such committee and to fill vacancies in it. A majority of the members of any such committee shall constitute a quorum. The Board of Directors shall name a chairman at the time it designates members to a committee. Each such committee shall appoint such subcommittees and assistants as it may deem necessary. Except as otherwise provided by the Board of Directors, meetings of any committee shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of Sections 4 and 6 of this Article III as the same shall from time to time be amended. Any member of any such committee elected or appointed by the Board of Directors may be removed by the Board of Directors whenever in its judgment the best interests of the Company will be served thereby, but such removal shall be without prejudice to the contract rights, if any, of the person so removed. Election or appointment of a member of a committee shall not of itself create contract rights.

ARTICLE IV

OFFICERS

SECTION 1. Officers. The officers of the Company shall consist of a President and a Secretary and such other officers and agents as the Board of Directors may from time to time elect or appoint. The Board of Directors may delegate to the Chairman of the Board and/or the Chief Executive Officer the authority to appoint and remove additional officers and agents of the Company. Each officer shall hold office until his successor shall have been duly elected or appointed and shall qualify or until his death or until he shall resign or shall have been removed in the manner hereinafter provided. Any two or more offices may be held by the same person. Except for the Chairman of the Board, if any, no officer need be a director.

SECTION 2. Vacancies; Removal. Whenever any vacancies shall occur in any office by death, resignation, increase in the number of offices of the Company, or otherwise, the officer so elected shall hold office until his successor is chosen and qualified. Any officer of the Company may be removed at any time by the Board of Directors, whenever in its judgment the best interests of the Company will be served thereby, or, except in the case of an officer appointed by the Board of Directors, by the Chairman of the Board and/or the Chief Executive Officer on whom the power of removal is conferred by the Board of Directors, but such removal shall be without prejudice to the contract rights, if any, of the person so removed. Election or appointment of an officer or agent shall not of itself create contract rights.

SECTION 3. Powers and Duties of Officers. The officers of the Company shall have such powers and duties as generally pertain to their offices as well as such powers and duties as from time to time shall be conferred by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE V

INDEMNIFICATION

SECTION 1. General. The Company shall indemnify and hold harmless the Indemnitee (as this and all other capitalized words are defined in this Article V or in Article 2.02-1 of the TBCA), to the fullest extent permitted, or not prohibited, by the TBCA or other applicable law as the same exists or may hereafter be amended (but in the case of any such amendment, with respect to Matters occurring before such amendment, only to the extent that such amendment permits the Company to provide broader indemnification rights than said law permitted the Company to provide prior to such amendment). The provisions set forth below in this Article V are provided as means of furtherance and implementation of, and not in limitation on, the obligation expressed in this Section 1.

SECTION 2. Advancement or Reimbursement of Expenses. The rights of the Indemnitee provided under Section 1 of this Article V shall include, but not be limited to, the right to be indemnified and to have Expenses advanced (including the payment of expenses before final disposition of a Proceeding) in all Proceedings to the fullest extent permitted, or not prohibited, by the TBCA or other applicable law. In addition, to the extent the Indemnitee is, by reason of his Corporate Status, a witness or otherwise participates in any Proceeding at a time when he is not named a defendant or respondent in the Proceeding, he shall be indemnified against all Expenses actually and reasonably incurred by him or on his behalf in connection therewith. The Indemnitee shall be advanced Expenses, within ten days after any request for such advancement, to the fullest extent permitted, or not prohibited, by Article 2.02-1 of the TBCA; provided that the Indemnitee has provided to the Company all affirmations, acknowledgments, representations and undertakings that may be required of the Indemnitee by Article 2.02-1 of the TBCA.

SECTION 3. Request for Indemnification. To obtain indemnification, the Indemnitee shall submit to the Secretary of the Company a written claim or request. Such written claim or request shall contain sufficient information to reasonably inform the Company about the nature and extent of the indemnification or advance sought by the Indemnitee. The Secretary of the Company shall promptly advise the Board of Directors of such request.

SECTION 4. Determination of Request. Upon written request to the Company by an Indemnitee for indemnification pursuant to these Bylaws, a determination, if required by applicable law, with respect to an Indemnitee's entitlement thereto shall be made in accordance with Article 2.02-1 of the TBCA; provided, however, that notwithstanding the foregoing, if a Change in Control shall have occurred, such determination shall be made by a Special Legal Counsel selected by the Board of Directors, unless the Indemnitee shall request that such determination be made in accordance with Article 2.02-1F (1) or (2). If entitlement to indemnification is to be determined by a Special Legal Counsel, the Company shall furnish notice to the Indemnitee within ten days after receipt of the claim or request for

indemnification, specifying the identity and address of the Special Legal Counsel. The Indemnitee may, within fourteen days after receipt of such written notice of selection, deliver to the Company a written objection to such selection. Such objection may be asserted only on the ground that the Special Legal Counsel selected does not meet the requirements of a Special Legal Counsel as defined in Section 10 of this Article V, and the objection shall set forth with particularity the factual basis for that assertion. If there is an objection to the selection of the Special Legal Counsel, either the Company or the Indemnitee may petition the Court for a determination that the objection is without a reasonable basis and/or for the appointment of a Special Legal Counsel selected by the Court. The Company shall pay any and all reasonable fees and expenses of the Special Legal Counsel incurred in connection with any such determination. If a Change in Control shall have occurred, the Indemnitee shall be presumed (except as otherwise expressly provided in this Article) to be entitled to indemnification under this Article V upon submission of a request to the Company for indemnification, and thereafter the Company shall have the burden of proof in overcoming that presumption in reaching a determination contrary to that presumption. The presumption shall be used by the Special Legal Counsel, or such other person or persons determining entitlement to indemnification, as a basis for a determination of entitlement to indemnification unless the Company provides information sufficient to overcome such presumption by clear and convincing evidence or the investigation, review and analysis of the Special Legal Counsel or such other person or persons convinces him or them by clear and convincing evidence that the presumption should not apply.

SECTION 5. Effect of Certain Proceedings. The termination of any Proceeding or of any Matter therein, by judgment, order, settlement or conviction, or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not (except as otherwise expressly provided in this Article V) of itself adversely affect the right of the Indemnitee to indemnification or create a presumption that (a) the Indemnitee did not conduct himself in good faith and in a manner which he reasonably believed, in the case of conduct in his official capacity as a director of the Company, to be in the best interests of the Company, or, in all other cases, that at least his conduct was not opposed to the Company's best interests, or (b) with respect to any criminal Proceeding, that the Indemnitee had reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was unlawful.

SECTION 6. Expenses of Enforcement of Article. In the event that an Indemnitee, pursuant to this Article V, seeks a judicial adjudication to enforce his rights under, or to recover damages for breach of, rights created under or pursuant to this Article V, the Indemnitee shall be entitled to recover from the Company, and shall be indemnified by the Company against, any and all Expenses actually and reasonably incurred by him in such judicial adjudication but only if he prevails therein. If it shall be determined in said judicial adjudication that the Indemnitee is entitled to receive part but not all of the indemnification or advancement of Expenses sought, the Expenses incurred by the Indemnitee in connection with such judicial adjudication shall be reasonably prorated in good faith by counsel for the Indemnitee. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if a Change in Control shall have occurred, the Indemnitee shall be entitled to indemnification under this Section 6 regardless of whether indemnitee ultimately prevails in such judicial adjudication.

SECTION 7. Nonexclusive Rights. The rights of indemnification and to receive advancement of Expenses as provided by this Article V shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which the Indemnitee may at any time be entitled under applicable law, the

Articles of Incorporation, these Bylaws, agreement, insurance, arrangement, a vote of shareholders or a resolution of directors, or otherwise. No amendment, alteration or repeal of this Article V or any provision thereof shall be effective as to any Indemnitee for acts, events and circumstances that occurred, in whole or in part, before such amendment, alteration or repeal. The provisions of this Article V shall continue as to an Indemnitee whose Corporate Status has ceased and shall inure to the benefit of his heirs, executors and administrators.

SECTION 8. Invalidity. If any provision or provisions of this Article V shall be held to be invalid, illegal or unenforceable for any reason whatsoever, the validity, legality and enforceability of the remaining provisions shall not in any way be affected or impaired thereby; and, to the fullest extent possible, the provisions of this Article V shall be construed so as to give effect to the intent manifested by the provision held invalid, illegal or unenforceable.

SECTION 9. Indemnification of Other Persons. The Company may, by adoption of a resolution of the Board of Directors, indemnify and advance expenses to any other person who is, or is threatened to be made, a witness in or a party to any Proceeding as described in Section 1 or Section 2 of this Article V by reason of that person's Corporate Status to the same extent and subject to the same conditions (or to a lesser extent and/or with other conditions as the Board of Directors may determine) under which it may indemnify and advance expenses to an Indemnitee under this Article V.

SECTION 10. Definitions. For purposes of this Article V:

"Change of Control" means a change in control of the Company occurring after the date of adoption of these Bylaws in any of the following circumstances: (a) there shall have occurred an event required to be reported in response to Item 6(e) of Schedule 14A of Regulation 14A (or in response to any similar item on any similar schedule or form) promulgated under the Exchange Act, whether or not the Company is then subject to such reporting requirement; (b) any "person" (as such term is used in Section 13(d) and 14(d) of the Exchange Act), other than a trustee or other fiduciary holding securities under an employee benefit plan of the Company or a corporation or other entity owned directly or indirectly by the shareholders of the Company in substantially the same proportions as their ownership of stock of the Company, shall have become the "beneficial owner" (as defined in Rule 13d-3 under the Exchange Act), directly or indirectly, of securities of the Company representing 30% or more of the combined voting power of the Company's then outstanding voting securities without prior approval of at least two-thirds of the members of the Board of Directors in office immediately prior to such person attaining such percentage interest; (c) the Company is a party to a merger, consolidation, share exchange, sale of assets or other reorganization, or a proxy contest, as a consequence of which members of the Board of Directors in office immediately prior to such transaction or event constitute less than a majority of the Board of Directors thereafter; (d) during any fifteen-month period, individuals who at the beginning of such period constituted the Board of Directors (including for this purpose any new director whose election or nomination for election by the Company's shareholders was approved by a vote of at least two-thirds of the directors then still in office who were directors at the beginning of such period) cease for any reason to constitute at least a majority of the Board of Directors.

"Corporate Status" describes the status of a person as a director, officer, partner, venturer, proprietor, trustee, employee (including an employee acting in his Designated Professional Capacity), or agent or similar functionary of the Company or of any other foreign or domestic corporation, partnership, joint venture, sole proprietorship, trust, employee benefit plan or other enterprise which such person is or was serving in such capacity at the request of the Company. The Company hereby acknowledges that unless and until the Company provides the Indemnatee with written notice to the contrary, the Indemnatee's service as a director, officer, partner, venturer, proprietor, trustee, employee, agent or similar functionary of an Affiliate of the Company shall be conclusively presumed to be at the Company's request. An Affiliate of the Company shall be deemed to be (a) any foreign or domestic corporation in which the Company owns or controls, directly or indirectly, 5% or more of the shares entitled to be voted in the election of directors of such corporation; (b) any foreign or domestic partnership, joint venture, proprietorship or other enterprise in which the Company owns or controls, directly or indirectly, 5% or more of the revenue interests in such partnership, joint venture, proprietorship or other enterprise; or (c) any trust or employee benefit plan the beneficiaries of which include the Company, any Affiliate of the Company as defined in the foregoing clauses (a) and (b) or any of the directors, officers, partners, venturers, proprietors, employees, agents or similar functionaries of the Company or of such Affiliates of the Company.

"Expenses" shall include all reasonable attorneys' fees, retainers, court costs, transcript costs, fees of experts, witness fees, travel expenses, duplicating costs, printing and binding costs, telephone charges, postage, delivery service fees, and all other disbursements or expenses of the types customarily incurred in connection with prosecuting, defending, preparing to prosecute or defend, investigating, or being or preparing to be a witness in a Proceeding.

"Indemnatee" includes any officer or director of the Company who is, or is threatened to be made, a witness in or a party to any Proceeding as described in Section 1 or Section 2 of this Article V by reason of his Corporate Status.

"Matter" is a claim, a material issue, or a substantial request for relief.

"Proceeding" includes any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, arbitration, alternate dispute resolution proceeding, investigation, administrative hearing and any other proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, investigative or other, any appeal in such action, suit, arbitration, proceeding or hearing, or any inquiry or investigation, whether conducted by or on behalf of the Company, a subsidiary of the Company or any other party, formal or informal, that the Indemnatee in good faith believes might lead to the institution of any such action, suit, arbitration, proceeding, investigation or hearing, except one initiated by an Indemnatee pursuant to Section 6 of this Article V.

"Special Legal Counsel" means a law firm, or member of a law firm, that is experienced in matters of corporation law and neither presently is, nor in the five years previous to his selection or appointment has been, retained to represent: (a) the Company

or the Indemnitee in any matter material to either such party; (b) any other party to the Proceeding giving rise to a claim for indemnification hereunder; or (c) the beneficial owner, directly or indirectly, of securities of the Company representing 30% or more of the combined voting power of the Company's then outstanding voting securities. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the term "Special Legal Counsel" shall not include any person who, under the applicable standards of professional conduct then prevailing, would have a conflict of interest in representing either the Company or the Indemnitee in an action to determine the Indemnitee's rights to indemnification under these Bylaws.

For the purposes of this Article V, an employee acting in his "Designated Professional Capacity" shall include, but not be limited to, a physician, nurse, psychologist or therapist, registered surveyor, registered engineer, registered architect, attorney, certified public accountant or other person who renders such professional services within the course and scope of his employment, who is licensed by appropriate regulatory authorities to practice such profession and who, while acting in the course of such employment, committed or is alleged to have committed any negligent acts, errors or omissions in rendering such professional services at the request of the Company or pursuant to his employment (including, without limitation, rendering written or oral opinions to third parties).

SECTION 11. Notice. Any communication required or permitted to the Company under this Article V shall be addressed to the Secretary of the Company and any such communication to the Indemnitee shall be addressed to the Indemnitee's home address unless he specifies otherwise and shall be personally delivered or delivered by overnight mail or courier delivery.

SECTION 12. Insurance and Self-Insurance Arrangements. The Company may procure or maintain insurance or other similar arrangements, at its expense, to protect itself and any Indemnitee against any expense, liability or loss asserted against or incurred by such person, incurred by him in such a capacity or arising out of his Corporate Status as such a person, whether or not the Company would have the power to indemnify such person against such expense or liability. In considering the cost and availability of such insurance, the Company (through the exercise of the business judgment of its directors and officers) may, from time to time, purchase insurance which provides for any and all of (a) deductibles, (b) limits on payments required to be made by the insurer, or (c) coverage which may not be as comprehensive as that previously included in insurance purchased by the Company. The purchase of insurance with deductibles, limits on payments and coverage exclusions will be deemed to be in the best interest of the Company but may not be in the best interest of certain of the persons covered thereby. As to the Company, purchasing insurance with deductibles, limits on payments, and coverage exclusions is similar to the Company's practice of self-insurance in other areas. In order to protect the Indemnitees who would otherwise be more fully or entirely covered under such policies, the Company shall indemnify and hold each of them harmless as provided in Section 1 or Section 2 of this Article V, without regard to whether the Company would otherwise be entitled to indemnify such officer or director under the other provisions of this Article, or under any law, agreement, vote of shareholders or directors or other arrangement, to the extent (i) of such deductibles, (ii) of amounts exceeding payments required to be made by an insurer or (iii) that prior policies of officer's and director's liability insurance held by the Company or its predecessors would have provided for payment to such officer or director.

Notwithstanding the foregoing provision of this Section 12, no Indemnitee shall be entitled to indemnification for the results of such person's conduct that is intentionally adverse to the interests of the Company. This Section 12 is authorized by Section 2.02-1(R) of the TBCA as in effect on August 31, 2001, and further is intended to establish an arrangement of self-insurance pursuant to that section.

ARTICLE VI

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. Offices. The principal office of the Company shall be located in Houston, Texas, unless and until changed by resolution of the Board of Directors. The Company may also have offices at such other places as the Board of Directors may designate from time to time, or as the business of the Company may require. The principal office and registered office may be, but need not be, the same.

SECTION 2. Resignations. Any director or officer may resign at any time. Such resignations shall be made in writing and shall take effect at the time specified therein, or, if no time be specified, at the time of its receipt by the Chairman of the Board, if there is one, the Chief Executive Officer, if there is one, the President or the Secretary. The acceptance of a resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective, unless expressly so provided in the resignation.

SECTION 3. Seal. The Corporate Seal shall be circular in form, shall have inscribed thereon the name of the Company and may be used by causing it or a facsimile thereof to be impressed or affixed or otherwise reproduced.

SECTION 4. Separability. If one or more of the provisions of these Bylaws shall be held to be invalid, illegal or unenforceable, such invalidity, illegality or unenforceability shall not affect any other provision hereof and these Bylaws shall be construed as if such invalid, illegal or unenforceable provision or provisions had never been contained herein.

ARTICLE VII

AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

SECTION 1. Vote Requirements. The Board of Directors shall have the power to alter, amend or repeal the Bylaws or adopt new Bylaws. Any alteration, amendment or repeal of the Bylaws or adoption of new Bylaws shall require: (1) the affirmative vote of at least 80% of all directors then in office at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors or (2) the affirmative vote of the holders of at least 80% of the voting power of all the shares of the corporation entitled to vote in the election of directors, voting together as a single class.

SECTION 2. Shareholder Proposals. No proposal by a shareholder made pursuant to Article VIII of the Articles of Incorporation and Section 1 of this Article VII may be voted upon at an annual meeting of shareholders unless such shareholder shall have delivered or mailed in a timely manner (as set forth in this Section 2) and in writing to the Secretary of the Company (a) notice of such proposal and the text of the proposed alteration, amendment or repeal, (b)

evidence reasonably satisfactory to the Secretary of the Company, of such shareholder's status as such and of the number of shares of each class of capital stock of the Company of which such shareholder is the beneficial owner, (c) a list of the names and addresses of other beneficial owners of shares of the capital stock of the Company, if any, with whom such shareholder is acting in concert, and the number of shares of each class of capital stock of the Company beneficially owned by each such beneficial owner and (d) an opinion of counsel, which counsel and the form and substance of which opinion shall be reasonably satisfactory to the Board of Directors of the Company, to the effect that the Bylaws (if any) resulting from the adoption of such proposal would not be in conflict with the Articles of Incorporation or the laws of the State of Texas. To be timely in connection with an annual meeting of shareholders, a shareholder's notice and other aforesaid items shall be delivered to or mailed and received at the principal executive offices of the Company not less than 90 days nor more than 180 days prior to the date on which the immediately preceding year's annual meeting of shareholders was held; provided, however, that if the date of the annual meeting is advanced more than 30 days prior to or delayed by more than 60 days after the anniversary of the preceding year's annual meeting, notice by the shareholder to be timely must be so delivered not earlier than 180 days prior to such annual meeting and not later than the last to occur of the close of business on (i) the 90th day prior to such annual meeting or (ii) the 10th day following the day on which the Company first makes public announcement of the date of such meeting by (A) a mailing to shareholders, (B) a press release or (C) a filing with the Commission pursuant to Section 13(a) or 14(a) of the Exchange Act. In no event shall the public disclosure of an adjournment of an annual meeting of shareholders commence a new time period for the giving of a shareholder's notice as described above.

Within 30 days after such shareholder shall have submitted the aforesaid items, the Secretary or the Board of Directors of the Company shall determine whether the items to be ruled upon by them are reasonably satisfactory and shall notify such shareholder in writing of its determination. If such shareholder fails to submit a required item in the form or within the time indicated, or if the Secretary or the Board of Directors of the Company determines that the items to be ruled upon by them are not reasonably satisfactory, then such proposal by such shareholder may not be voted upon by the shareholders of the Company at such annual meeting of shareholders. The Chairman of the Meeting shall, if the facts warrant, determine and declare to the meeting that a proposal by a shareholder of the Company made pursuant to Article VIII of the Articles of Incorporation and Section 1 of this Article VII was not made in accordance with the procedures prescribed by these Bylaws, and if he should so determine, he shall so declare to the meeting and the defective proposal shall be disregarded. Beneficial ownership shall be determined in accordance with Rule 13d-3 under the Exchange Act.

Nothing in this Section 2 shall be interpreted or construed to require the inclusion of information about any such proposal in any proxy statement distributed by, at the direction of, or on behalf of the Board of Directors or the Company.

No proposal by a shareholder made pursuant to Article VIII of the Articles of Incorporation and Section 1 of this Article VII shall be voted upon at a special meeting of shareholders unless such proposal has been stated in the notice of such special meeting or shall otherwise have been properly brought before the meeting by or at the direction of the Chairman of the Meeting or the Board of Directors (or any duly authorized committee thereof).

STATEMENT OF RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING SERIES OF SHARES

DESIGNATED

SERIES A PREFERRED STOCK

OF

CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.

Pursuant to Article 2.13D of
the Texas Business Corporation Act

Pursuant to the provisions of Article 2.13D of the Texas Business Corporation Act, the undersigned submits the following statement for the purpose of establishing and designating a series of shares of its Preferred Stock, without par value, designated "Series A Preferred Stock" and fixing and determining the relative rights and preferences thereof:

1. The name of the company is CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC. (the "Company").

2. The following resolution establishing and designating a series of shares and fixing and determining the relative rights and preferences thereof, was duly adopted by all necessary action on the part of the Company on November 1, 2001:

RESOLVED, that pursuant to the authority vested in the Board of Directors of this Company in accordance with the provisions of the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation of the Company, a series of Preferred Stock, without par value, of the Company be and hereby is created, and that the designation and number of shares thereof and the preferences, limitations and relative rights, including voting rights, of the shares of such series and the qualifications, limitations and restrictions thereof are as follows:

Series A Preferred Stock

1. Designation and Amount. There shall be a series of Preferred Stock that shall be designated as "Series A Preferred Stock," and the number of shares constituting such series shall be 1,000,000. Such number of shares may be increased or decreased by resolution of the Board of Directors; provided, however, that no decrease shall reduce the number of shares of Series A Preferred Stock to less than the number of shares then issued and outstanding plus the number of shares issuable upon exercise of outstanding rights, options or warrants or upon conversion of outstanding securities issued by the Company.

2. Dividends and Distributions.

(A) Subject to the prior and superior rights of the holders of any shares of any series of Preferred Stock ranking prior and superior to the shares of Series A Preferred Stock with respect to dividends, the holders of shares of Series A Preferred Stock, in preference to the holders of shares of any class or series of stock of the Company ranking junior to the Series A

Preferred Stock, shall be entitled to receive, when, as and if declared by the Board of Directors out of assets of the Company legally available for the purpose, quarterly dividends payable in cash on the first day of January, April, July and October in each year (each such date being referred to herein as a "Quarterly Dividend Payment Date"), commencing on the first Quarterly Dividend Payment Date after the first issuance of a share or fraction of a share of Series A Preferred Stock, in an amount per share (rounded to the nearest cent) equal to the greater of (a) \$10.00 or (b) the Adjustment Number (as defined below) times the aggregate per share amount of all cash dividends, and the Adjustment Number times the aggregate per share amount (payable in kind) of all non-cash dividends or other distributions other than a dividend payable in shares of Common Stock, without par value, of the Company (the "Common Stock") or a subdivision of the outstanding shares of Common Stock (by reclassification or otherwise), declared on the Common Stock, since the immediately preceding Quarterly Dividend Payment Date, or, with respect to the first Quarterly Dividend Payment Date, since the first issuance of any share or fraction of a share of Series A Preferred Stock. The "Adjustment Number" shall initially be 1,000. In the event the Company shall at any time after the time of the issuance by the Secretary of State of the State of Texas of the certificate of merger with respect to the merger of Reliant Energy MergerCo, Inc., a Texas corporation ("MergerCo"), with and into Reliant Energy, Incorporated, a Texas corporation ("REI"), pursuant to the Agreement and Plan of Merger dated as of October 19, 2001, by and among REI, MergerCo and the Company (the "Merger"), or, if a later effective time was provided in the articles of merger with respect to the Merger, such later time (the "Rights Declaration Date") (i) declare any dividend on Common Stock payable in shares of Common Stock, (ii) subdivide the outstanding Common Stock or (iii) combine the outstanding Common Stock into a smaller number of shares, then in each such case the Adjustment Number in effect immediately prior to such event shall be adjusted by multiplying such Adjustment Number by a fraction the numerator of which is the number of shares of Common Stock outstanding immediately after such event and the denominator of which is the number of shares of Common Stock that were outstanding immediately prior to such event.

(B) The Company shall declare a dividend or distribution on the Series A Preferred Stock as provided in paragraph (A) above immediately after it declares a dividend or distribution on the Common Stock (other than a dividend payable in shares of Common Stock); provided that, in the event no dividend or distribution shall have been declared on the Common Stock during the period between any Quarterly Dividend Payment Date and the next subsequent Quarterly Dividend Payment Date, a dividend of \$10.00 per share on the Series A Preferred Stock shall nevertheless be payable on such subsequent Quarterly Dividend Payment Date.

(C) Dividends shall begin to accrue and be cumulative on outstanding shares of Series A Preferred Stock from the Quarterly Dividend Payment Date next preceding the date of issue of such shares of Series A Preferred Stock, unless the date of issue of such shares is prior to the record date for the first Quarterly Dividend Payment Date, in which case dividends on such shares shall begin to accrue from the date of issue of such shares, or unless the date of issue is a Quarterly Dividend Payment Date or is a date after the record date for the determination of holders of shares of Series A Preferred Stock entitled to receive a quarterly dividend and before such Quarterly Dividend Payment Date, in either of which events such dividends shall begin to accrue and be cumulative from such Quarterly Dividend Payment Date. Accrued but unpaid dividends shall not bear interest. Dividends paid on the shares of Series A Preferred Stock in an amount less than the total amount of such dividends at the time accrued and payable on such

shares shall be allocated pro rata on a share-by-share basis among all such shares at the time outstanding. The Board of Directors may fix a record date for the determination of holders of shares of Series A Preferred Stock entitled to receive payment of a dividend or distribution declared thereon.

3. Voting Rights. The holders of shares of Series A Preferred Stock shall have the following voting rights:

(A) Each share of Series A Preferred Stock shall entitle the holder thereof to a number of votes equal to the Adjustment Number on all matters submitted to a vote of the shareholders of the Company.

(B) Except as otherwise provided by law or the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation of the Company, the holders of shares of Series A Preferred Stock, the holders of shares of any other class or series entitled to vote with the Common Stock and the holders of shares of Common Stock shall vote together as one class on all matters submitted to a vote of shareholders of the Company.

(C) (i) If at any time dividends on any Series A Preferred Stock shall be in arrears in an amount equal to six quarterly dividends thereon, the occurrence of such contingency shall mark the beginning of a period (herein called a "default period") that shall extend until such time when all accrued and unpaid dividends for all previous quarterly dividend periods and for the current quarterly dividend period on all shares of Series A Preferred Stock then outstanding shall have been declared and paid or set apart for payment. During each default period, (1) the number of directors of the Company shall be increased by two, effective as of the time of election of such directors as herein provided, and (2) the holders of Preferred Stock (including holders of the Series A Preferred Stock) upon which these or like voting rights have been conferred and are exercisable (the "Voting Preferred Stock") with dividends in arrears in an amount equal to six quarterly dividends thereon, voting as a class, irrespective of series, shall have the right to elect such two directors.

(ii) During any default period, such voting right of the holders of Series A Preferred Stock may be exercised initially at a special meeting called pursuant to subparagraph (iii) of this Section 3(C) or at any annual meeting of shareholders, and thereafter at annual meetings of shareholders, provided that such voting right shall not be exercised unless the holders of at least one-third in number of the shares of Voting Preferred Stock outstanding shall be present in person or by proxy. The absence of a quorum of the holders of Common Stock shall not affect the exercise by the holders of Voting Preferred Stock of such voting right.

(iii) Unless the holders of Voting Preferred Stock shall, during an existing default period, have previously exercised their right to elect directors, the Board of Directors may order, or any shareholder or shareholders owning in the aggregate not less than ten percent of the total number of shares of Voting Preferred Stock outstanding, irrespective of series, may request, the calling of a special meeting of the holders of Voting Preferred Stock, which meeting shall thereupon be called by the Chairman, the President, a Vice President or the Corporate Secretary of the Company. Notice of such meeting and of any annual meeting at which holders of Voting Preferred Stock are entitled to vote pursuant to this paragraph (C)(iii) shall be given to each

holder of record of Voting Preferred Stock by mailing a copy of such notice to him at his last address as the same appears on the books of the Company. Such meeting shall be called for a time not earlier than 20 days and not later than 60 days after such order or request or, in default of the calling of such meeting within 60 days after such order or request, such meeting may be called on similar notice by any shareholder or shareholders owning in the aggregate not less than ten percent (10%) of the total number of shares of Voting Preferred Stock outstanding. Notwithstanding the provisions of this paragraph (C)(iii), no such special meeting shall be called during the period within 60 days immediately preceding the date fixed for the next annual meeting of the shareholders.

(iv) In any default period, after the holders of Voting Preferred Stock shall have exercised their right to elect directors voting as a class, (x) the directors so elected by the holders of Voting Preferred Stock shall continue in office until their successors shall have been elected by such holders or until the expiration of the default period, and (y) any vacancy in the Board of Directors may be filled by vote of a majority of the remaining directors theretofore elected by the holders of the class or classes of stock which elected the director whose office shall have become vacant. References in this paragraph (C) to directors elected by the holders of a particular class or classes of stock shall include directors elected by such directors to fill vacancies as provided in clause (y) of the foregoing sentence.

(v) Immediately upon the expiration of a default period, (x) the right of the holders of Voting Preferred Stock as a class to elect directors shall cease, (y) the term of any directors elected by the holders of Voting Preferred Stock as a class shall terminate and (z) the number of directors shall be such number as may be provided for in the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation of the Company or the Amended and Restated Bylaws irrespective of any increase made pursuant to the provisions of paragraph (C) of this Section 3 (such number being subject, however, to change thereafter in any manner provided by law or in the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation of the Company or the Amended and Restated Bylaws). Any vacancies in the Board of Directors effected by the provisions of clauses (y) and (z) in the preceding sentence may be filled by a majority of the remaining directors.

(D) Except as set forth herein, holders of Series A Preferred Stock shall have no special voting rights and their consent shall not be required (except to the extent they are entitled to vote with holders of Common Stock as set forth herein) for taking any corporate action.

4. Certain Restrictions.

(A) Whenever quarterly dividends or other dividends or distributions payable on the Series A Preferred Stock as provided in Section 2 are in arrears, thereafter and until all accrued and unpaid dividends and distributions, whether or not declared, on shares of Series A Preferred Stock outstanding shall have been paid in full, the Company shall not:

(i) declare or pay dividends on, make any other distributions on, or redeem or purchase or otherwise acquire for consideration any shares of stock ranking junior (either as to dividends or upon liquidation, dissolution or winding up) to the Series A Preferred Stock;

(ii) declare or pay dividends on or make any other distributions on any shares of stock ranking on a parity (either as to dividends or upon liquidation, dissolution or winding up) with the Series A Preferred Stock, except dividends paid ratably on the Series A Preferred Stock and all such parity stock on which dividends are payable or in arrears in proportion to the total amounts to which the holders of all such shares are then entitled; or

(iii) redeem or purchase or otherwise acquire for consideration any shares of Series A Preferred Stock, or any shares of stock ranking on a parity with the Series A Preferred Stock, except in accordance with a purchase offer made in writing or by publication (as determined by the Board of Directors) to all holders of Series A Preferred Stock, or to all such holders and the holders of any such shares ranking on a parity therewith, upon such terms as the Board of Directors, after consideration of the respective annual dividend rates and other relative powers, preferences and rights of the respective series and classes, shall determine in good faith will result in fair and equitable treatment among the respective series or classes.

(B) The Company shall not permit any subsidiary of the Company to purchase or otherwise acquire for consideration any shares of capital stock of the Company unless the Company could, under paragraph (A) of this Section 4, purchase or otherwise acquire such shares at such time and in such manner.

5. Reacquired Shares. Any shares of Series A Preferred Stock purchased or otherwise acquired by the Company in any manner whatsoever shall be retired and canceled promptly after the acquisition thereof. All such shares shall upon their cancellation become authorized but unissued shares of Preferred Stock and may be reissued as part of a new series of Preferred Stock to be created by resolution or resolutions of the Board of Directors, subject to any conditions and restrictions on issuance set forth in the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation of the Company.

6. Liquidation, Dissolution or Winding Up. (A) Upon any liquidation (voluntary or otherwise), dissolution or winding up of the Company, no distribution shall be made to the holders of shares of stock ranking junior (either as to dividends or upon liquidation, dissolution or winding up) to the Series A Preferred Stock unless, prior thereto, the holders of shares of Series A Preferred Stock shall have received \$1,000 per share, plus an amount equal to accrued and unpaid dividends and distributions thereon, whether or not declared, to the date of such payment (the "Series A Liquidation Preference"). Following the payment of the full amount of the Series A Liquidation Preference, no additional distributions shall be made to the holders of shares of Series A Preferred Stock unless, prior thereto, the holders of shares of Common Stock shall have received an amount per share (the "Common Adjustment") equal to the quotient obtained by dividing (i) the Series A Liquidation Preference by (ii) the Adjustment Number. Following the payment of the full amount of the Series A Liquidation Preference and the Common Adjustment in respect of all outstanding shares of Series A Preferred Stock and Common Stock, respectively, holders of Series A Preferred Stock and holders of shares of Common Stock shall, subject to the prior rights of all other series of Preferred Stock, if any, ranking prior thereto, receive their ratable and proportionate share of the remaining assets to be distributed in the ratio of the Adjustment Number to 1 with respect to such Series A Preferred Stock and Common Stock, on a per share basis, respectively.

(B) In the event, however, that there are not sufficient assets available to permit payment in full of the Series A Liquidation Preference and the liquidation preferences of all other series of Preferred Stock, if any, that rank on a parity with the Series A Preferred Stock, then such remaining assets shall be distributed ratably to the holders of such parity shares in proportion to their respective liquidation preferences. In the event, however, that there are not sufficient assets available to permit payment in full of the Common Adjustment, then such remaining assets shall be distributed ratably to the holders of Common Stock.

(C) Neither the merger or consolidation of the Company into or with another Company nor the merger or consolidation of any other Company into or with the Company shall be deemed to be a liquidation, dissolution or winding up of the Company within the meaning of this Section 6, but the sale, lease or conveyance of all or substantially all of the Company's assets shall be deemed to be a liquidation, dissolution or winding up of the Company within the meaning of this Section 6.

7. Consolidation, Merger, etc. In case the Company shall enter into any consolidation, merger, combination, share exchange or other transaction in which the shares of Common Stock are exchanged for or changed into other stock or securities, cash and/or any other property, then in any such case each share of Series A Preferred Stock shall at the same time be similarly exchanged or changed in an amount per share equal to the Adjustment Number times the aggregate amount of stock, securities, cash and/or any other property (payable in kind), as the case may be, into which or for which each share of Common Stock is changed or exchanged.

8. Redemption. (A) The Company, at its option, may redeem shares of the Series A Preferred Stock in whole at any time and in part from time to time, at a redemption price equal to the Adjustment Number times the current per share market price (as such term is hereinafter defined) of the Common Stock on the date of the mailing of the notice of redemption, together with unpaid accumulated dividends to the date of such redemption. The "current per share market price" on any date shall be deemed to be the average of the closing price per share of such Common Stock for the ten consecutive Trading Days (as such term is hereinafter defined) immediately prior to such date; provided, however, that in the event that the current per share market price of the Common Stock is determined during a period following the announcement of (A) a dividend or distribution on the Common Stock other than a regular quarterly cash dividend or (B) any subdivision, combination or reclassification of such Common Stock and the ex-dividend date for such dividend or distribution, or the record date for such subdivision, combination or reclassification, shall not have occurred prior to the commencement of such ten Trading Day period, then, and in each such case, the current per share market price shall be properly adjusted to take into account ex-dividend trading. The closing price for each day shall be the last sales price, regular way, or, in case no such sale takes place on such day, the average of the closing bid and asked prices, regular way, in either case as reported in the principal transaction reporting system with respect to securities listed or admitted to trading on the New York Stock Exchange, or, if the Common Stock is not listed or admitted to trading on the New York Stock Exchange, on the principal national securities exchange on which the Common Stock is listed or admitted to trading, or, if the Common Stock is not listed or admitted to trading on any national securities exchange but sales price information is reported for such security, as reported by the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc. Automated Quotations System ("Nasdaq") or such other self-regulatory organization or registered securities information

processor (as such terms are used under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended) that then reports information concerning the Common Stock, or, if sales price information is not so reported, the average of the high bid and low asked prices in the over-the-counter market on such day, as reported by Nasdaq or such other entity, or, if on any such date the Common Stock is not quoted by any such entity, the average of the closing bid and asked prices as furnished by a professional market maker making a market in the Common Stock selected by the Board of Directors. If on any such date no such market maker is making a market in the Common Stock, the fair value of the Common Stock on such date as determined in good faith by the Board of Directors shall be used. The term "Trading Day" shall mean a day on which the principal national securities exchange on which the Common Stock is listed or admitted to trading is open for the transaction of business, or, if the Common Stock is not listed or admitted to trading on any national securities exchange but is quoted by Nasdaq, a day on which Nasdaq reports trades, or, if the Common Stock is not so quoted, a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday on which banking institutions in the State of New York or Texas are not authorized or obligated by law or executive order to close.

(B) In the event that fewer than all of the outstanding shares of the Series A Preferred Stock are to be redeemed, the number of shares to be redeemed shall be determined by the Board of Directors and the shares to be redeemed shall be determined by lot or pro rata as may be determined by the Board of Directors or by any other method that may be determined by the Board of Directors in its sole discretion to be equitable.

(C) Notice of any such redemption shall be given by mailing to the holders of the shares of Series A Preferred Stock to be redeemed a notice of such redemption, first class postage prepaid, not later than the twentieth day and not earlier than the sixtieth day before the date fixed for redemption, at their last address as the same shall appear upon the books of the Company. Each such notice shall state: (i) the redemption date; (ii) the number of shares to be redeemed and, if fewer than all the shares held by such holder are to be redeemed, the number of such shares to be redeemed from such holder; (iii) the redemption price; (iv) the place or places where certificates for such shares are to be surrendered for payment of the redemption price; and (v) that dividends on the shares to be redeemed will cease to accrue on the close of business on such redemption date. Any notice that is mailed in the manner herein provided shall be conclusively presumed to have been duly given, whether or not the shareholder received such notice, and failure duly to give such notice by mail, or any defect in such notice, to any holder of Series A Preferred Stock shall not affect the validity of the proceedings for the redemption of any other shares of Series A Preferred Stock that are to be redeemed. On or after the date fixed for redemption as stated in such notice, each holder of the shares called for redemption shall surrender the certificate evidencing such shares to the Company at the place designated in such notice and shall thereupon be entitled to receive payment of the redemption price. If fewer than all the shares represented by any such surrendered certificate are redeemed, a new certificate shall be issued representing the unredeemed shares.

(D) The shares of Series A Preferred Stock shall not be subject to the operation of any purchase, retirement or sinking fund.

9. Ranking. The Series A Preferred Stock shall rank junior to all other series of Preferred Stock (other than any such series of Preferred Stock the terms of which shall provide

otherwise) in respect to dividend and liquidation rights, and shall rank senior to the Common Stock as to such matters.

10. Amendment. At any time that any shares of Series A Preferred Stock are outstanding, the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation of the Company shall not be amended in any manner which would materially alter or change the powers, preferences or special rights of the Series A Preferred Stock so as to affect them adversely without the affirmative vote of the holders of at least two-thirds or more of the outstanding shares of Series A Preferred Stock, voting separately as a class.

11. Fractional Shares. Series A Preferred Stock may be issued in fractions of a share that shall entitle the holder, in proportion to such holder's fractional shares, to exercise voting rights, receive dividends, participate in distributions and to have the benefit of all other rights of holders of Series A Preferred Stock.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC. has caused this Statement to be executed on its behalf by the undersigned officer this 27th day of March, 2002.

CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.

/s/ Rufus S. Scott

Name: Rufus S. Scott
Title: Vice President

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CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.

AND

JPMORGAN CHASE BANK,
RIGHTS AGENT

RIGHTS AGREEMENT
DATED AS OF JANUARY 1, 2002

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE ----	Section 1. Certain	
Definitions.....			1
		Section 2. Appointment of Rights	
Agent.....		Issue of Rights	7
		Section 3.	
Certificates.....			7
		Section 4. Form of Rights	
Certificates.....			9
		Section 5. Countersignature and	
Registration.....			10
		Section 6.	
Transfer, Split-Up, Combination and Exchange of Rights Certificates; Mutilated, Destroyed, Lost or Stolen Rights Certificates.....			10
		Section 7. Exercise of Rights; Purchase Price.....	11
		Section 8. Cancellation and Destruction of Rights	
Certificates.....			13
		Section 9. Reservation and Availability of Capital Stock.....	13
		Section 10. Preferred Stock Record	
Date.....			14
		Section 11.	
Adjustment of Purchase Price, Number and Kind of Shares or Number of			
Rights.....			15
		Section 12. Certificate of Adjusted Purchase Price or Number of	
Shares.....			22
		Section 13. Consolidation, Merger or Sale or Transfer of Assets, Cash Flow or Earning	
Power.....			22
		Section 14. Fractional Rights and Fractional	
Shares.....			25
		Section 15. Rights of	
Action.....			26
		Section 16. Agreement of Rights	
Holders.....			26
		Section	
Shareholder.....			27
		Section 18. Concerning the	
Rights Agent.....			27
		Section 19. Merger or Consolidation or Change of Name of Rights	
Agent.....			28
		Section 20. Duties of Rights	
Agent.....			28
		Section	
Agent.....			30
		Section	
Certificates.....			31

Section 23.	Redemption and Termination.....	32
Section 24.	Exchange.....	32
Section 25.	Notice of Certain Events.....	33
Section 26.	Notices.....	34
Section 27.	Supplements and Amendments.....	34
Section 28.	Successors.....	35
Section 29.	Determinations and Actions by the Board of Directors, etc.....	35
Section 30.	Benefits of this Agreement.....	36
Section 31.	Severability.....	36
Section 32.	Governing Law.....	36
Section 33.	Counterparts.....	36
Section 34.	Descriptive Headings.....	38
Exhibit A --	Form of Statement of Resolution Establishing Series of Shares designated Series A Preferred Stock	
Exhibit B --	Form of Rights Certificate	
Exhibit C --	Summary of Rights to Purchase Preferred Stock	

RIGHTS AGREEMENT

This Rights Agreement, dated as of January 1, 2002 (the "Agreement"), between CenterPoint Energy, Inc., a Texas corporation (the "Company"), and JPMorgan Chase Bank (the "Rights Agent"),

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, in connection with the merger of Reliant Energy MergerCo, Inc., a Texas corporation ("MergerCo"), with and into Reliant Energy, Incorporated, a Texas corporation ("REI"), with REI being the surviving corporation (the "Merger"), pursuant to the Agreement and Plan of Merger dated as of October 19, 2001, by and among REI, MergerCo and the Company (the "Merger Agreement"), the Board of Directors of the Company authorized the issuance of one Right (as such number may hereinafter be adjusted pursuant to the provisions of Section 11(p) hereof) for each share of common stock, without par value, of the Company (the "Common Stock") issued (whether originally issued or delivered from the Company's treasury) from and after the Effective Time (as hereinafter defined) and prior to the earlier of the Distribution Date (as hereinafter defined) and the Expiration Date (as hereinafter defined), and, in certain circumstances provided for in Section 22 hereof, after the Distribution Date, each Right initially representing the right to purchase one Fractional Share (as hereinafter defined) of Series A Preferred Stock of the Company, upon the terms and subject to the conditions hereinafter set forth (the "Rights");

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the premises and the mutual agreements herein set forth, the parties hereby agree as follows:

Section 1. Certain Definitions. For purposes of this Agreement, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

"Acquiring Person" shall mean any Person who or which, together with all Affiliates and Associates of such Person, shall be the Beneficial Owner of 20% or more of the shares of Common Stock then outstanding, but shall not include any Exempt Person; provided, however, that a Person shall not be or become an Acquiring Person if such Person, together with its Affiliates and Associates, shall become the Beneficial Owner of 20% or more of the shares of Common Stock then outstanding solely as a result of a reduction in the number of shares of Common Stock outstanding due to the repurchase of Common Stock by the Company, unless and until such time as such Person together with its Affiliate or Associate shall purchase or otherwise become the Beneficial Owner of additional shares of Common Stock constituting 1% or more of the then outstanding shares of Common Stock or any other Person (or Persons) who is (or collectively are) the Beneficial Owner of shares of Common Stock constituting 1% or more of the then outstanding shares of Common Stock shall become an Affiliate or Associate of such Person, unless, in either such case, such Person, together with all Affiliates and Associates of such Person, is not then the Beneficial Owner of 20% or more of the shares of Common Stock then outstanding; and provided, further, that if the Board of Directors, with the concurrence of a majority of the members of the Board of Directors who are not, and are not representatives, nominees, Affiliates or Associates of, such Person or an Acquiring Person, determines in good faith that a Person that would otherwise be an "Acquiring Person" has become such inadvertently

(including, without limitation, because (i) such Person was unaware that it beneficially owned a percentage of Common Stock that would otherwise cause such Person to be an "Acquiring Person" or (ii) such Person was aware of the extent of its Beneficial Ownership of Common Stock but had no actual knowledge of the consequences of such Beneficial Ownership under this Agreement) and without any intention of changing or influencing control of the Company, and if such Person as promptly as practicable divested or divests itself of Beneficial Ownership of a sufficient number of shares of Common Stock so that such Person would no longer be an "Acquiring Person," then such Person shall not be deemed to be or to have become an "Acquiring Person" for any purposes of this Agreement.

At any time that the Rights are redeemable, the Board of Directors may, generally or with respect to any specified Person or Persons, determine to increase to a specified percentage greater than that set forth herein or decrease to a specified percentage lower than that set forth herein or determine a number of shares to be (but in no event less than or equal to the percentage or number of shares of Common Stock then beneficially owned by such Person), the level of Beneficial Ownership of Common Stock at which a Person or such Person or Persons becomes an Acquiring Person.

"Adjustment Shares" shall have the meaning set forth in Section 11(a)(ii) hereof.

"Affiliate" shall have the meaning ascribed to such term in Rule 12b-2 of the General Rules and Regulations under the Exchange Act, as in effect on the date of this Agreement.

"Associate" shall mean, with reference to any Person, (1) any corporation, firm, partnership, association, unincorporated organization or other entity (other than the Company or a Subsidiary of the Company) of which such Person is an officer or general partner (or officer or general partner of a general partner) or is, directly or indirectly, the Beneficial Owner of 10% or more of any class of equity securities, (2) any trust or other estate in which such Person has a substantial beneficial interest or as to which such Person serves as trustee or in a similar fiduciary capacity and (3) any relative or spouse of such Person, or any relative of such spouse, who has the same home as such Person.

A Person shall be deemed the "Beneficial Owner" of, and shall be deemed to "beneficially own," any securities:

(i) that such Person or any of such Person's Affiliates or Associates, directly or indirectly, is the "beneficial owner" of (as determined pursuant to Rule 13d-3 of the General Rules and Regulations under the Exchange Act as in effect on the date of this Agreement) or otherwise has the right to vote or dispose of, including pursuant to any agreement, arrangement or understanding (whether or not in writing); provided, however, that a Person shall not be deemed the "Beneficial Owner" of, or to "beneficially own," any security under this subparagraph (i) as a result of an agreement, arrangement or understanding to vote such security if such agreement, arrangement or understanding: (A) arises solely from a revocable proxy or consent given in response to a public (i.e., not including a solicitation exempted by Rule 14a-2(b)(2) of the General Rules and Regulations under the Exchange Act as in effect on the date of this Agreement) proxy or

consent solicitation made pursuant to, and in accordance with, the applicable provisions of the General Rules and Regulations under the Exchange Act, (B) is not then reportable by such Person on Schedule 13D under the Exchange Act (or any comparable or successor report) and (C) does not constitute a trust, proxy, power of attorney or other device with the purpose or effect of allowing two or more persons, acting in concert, to avoid being deemed "beneficial owners" of such security or otherwise avoid the status of "Acquiring Person" under the terms of this Agreement or as part of a plan or scheme to evade the reporting requirements under Schedule 13D or Sections 13(d) or 13(g) of the Exchange Act;

(ii) that such Person or any of such Person's Affiliates or Associates, directly or indirectly, has the right or obligation to acquire (whether such right or obligation is exercisable or effective immediately or only after the passage of time or the occurrence of an event) pursuant to any agreement, arrangement or understanding (whether or not in writing) or upon the exercise of conversion rights, exchange rights, other rights, warrants or options, or otherwise; provided, however, that a Person shall not be deemed the "Beneficial Owner" of, or to "beneficially own," (A) securities tendered pursuant to a tender or exchange offer made by such Person or any of such Person's Affiliates or Associates until such tendered securities are accepted for purchase or exchange, or (B) securities issuable upon exercise of Rights at any time prior to the occurrence of a Triggering Event, or (C) securities issuable upon exercise of Rights from and after the occurrence of a Triggering Event which Rights were acquired by such Person or any of such Person's Affiliates or Associates prior to the Distribution Date or pursuant to Section 3(a) or Section 22 hereof (the "Original Rights") or pursuant to Section 11(i) or (p) hereof in connection with an adjustment made with respect to any Original Rights; or

(iii) that are beneficially owned, directly or indirectly, by (A) any other Person (or any Affiliate or Associate thereof) with which such Person or any of such Person's Affiliates or Associates has any agreement, arrangement or understanding (whether or not in writing) for the purpose of acquiring, holding, voting (except pursuant to a revocable proxy or consent as described in the proviso to subparagraph (i) of this definition) or disposing of any voting securities of the Company or (B) any group (as that term is used in Rule 13d-5(b) of the General Rules and Regulations under the Exchange Act as in effect on the date of this Agreement) of which such Person is a member;

provided, however, that nothing in this definition shall cause a Person engaged in business as an underwriter of securities to be the "Beneficial Owner" of, or to "beneficially own," any securities acquired through such Person's participation in good faith in a firm commitment underwriting (including, without limitation, securities acquired pursuant to stabilizing transactions to facilitate a public offering in accordance with Regulation M promulgated under the Exchange Act, or to cover overallotments created in connection with a public offering) until the expiration of forty days after the date of such acquisition. For purposes of this Agreement, "voting" a security shall include voting, granting a proxy, acting by consent, making a request or demand relating to corporate action (including, without limitation, calling a shareholder meeting), entering into a voting trust or voting agreement or otherwise giving an authorization (within the meaning of Section 14(a) of the Exchange Act as in effect on the date of this Agreement) in respect of such security.

"Business Day" shall mean any day other than a Saturday, Sunday or a day on which banking institutions in the State of New York or Texas are authorized or obligated by law or executive order to close.

"close of business" on any given date shall mean 5:00 p.m., New York City time, on such date; provided, however, that if such date is not a Business Day, it shall mean 5:00 p.m., New York City time, on the next succeeding Business Day.

"Closing Price" of a security for any day shall mean the last sales price, regular way, on such day or, in case no such sale takes place on such day, the average of the closing bid and asked prices, regular way, on such day, in either case as reported in the principal transaction reporting system with respect to securities listed or admitted to trading on the New York Stock Exchange, or, if such security is not listed or admitted to trading on the New York Stock Exchange, on the principal national securities exchange on which such security is listed or admitted to trading, or, if such security is not listed or admitted to trading on any national securities exchange but sales price information is reported for such security, as reported by Nasdaq or such other self-regulatory organization or registered securities information processor (as such terms are used under the Exchange Act) that then reports information concerning such security, or, if sales price information is not so reported, the average of the high bid and low asked prices in the over-the-counter market on such day, as reported by Nasdaq or such other entity, or, if on such day such security is not quoted by any such entity, the average of the closing bid and asked prices as furnished by a professional market maker making a market in such security selected by the Board of Directors of the Company. If on such day no market maker is making a market in such security, the fair value of such security on such day as determined in good faith by the Board of Directors of the Company shall be used.

"Common Stock" shall mean the common stock, without par value, of the Company, except that "Common Stock" when used with reference to equity interests issued by any Person other than the Company shall mean the capital stock of such Person with the greatest voting power, or the equity securities or other equity interest having power to control or direct the management, of such Person.

"Common Stock Equivalents" shall have the meaning set forth in Section 11(a)(iii) hereof.

"Company" shall mean the Person named as the "Company" in the preamble of this Agreement until a successor Person shall have become such or until a Principal Party shall assume, and thereafter be liable for, all obligations and duties of the Company hereunder, pursuant to the applicable provisions of this Agreement, and thereafter "Company" shall mean such successor Person or Principal Party.

"Current Market Price" shall have the meaning set forth in Section 11(d) hereof.

"Current Value" shall have the meaning set forth in Section 11(a)(iii) hereof.

"Distribution Date" shall mean the earlier of (i) the close of business on the tenth day (or, if such Stock Acquisition Date results from the consummation of a Permitted Offer, such

later date as may be determined by the Company's Board of Directors as set forth below at any time when the Rights are redeemable) after the Stock Acquisition Date or (ii) the close of business on the tenth Business Day (or such later date as may be determined by the Company's Board of Directors as set forth below before the Distribution Date occurs) after the date that a tender offer or exchange offer by any Person (other than any Exempt Person) is first published or sent or given within the meaning of Rule 14d-2(a) of the General Rules and Regulations under the Exchange Act as then in effect, if upon consummation thereof, such Person would be an Acquiring Person, other than a tender or exchange offer that is determined before the Distribution Date occurs to be a Permitted Offer. The Board of Directors of the Company may, to the extent set forth in the preceding sentence, defer the date set forth in clause (i) or (ii) of the preceding sentence to a specified later date or to an unspecified later date to be determined by a subsequent action or event (but in no event to a date later than the close of business on the tenth day after the first occurrence of a Triggering Event).

"Effective Time" shall mean the time of the issuance of the certificate of merger with respect to the Merger by the Secretary of State of the State of Texas or, if a later effective time was provided in the articles of merger with respect to the Merger, such later time.

"Equivalent Preferred Stock" shall have the meaning set forth in Section 11(b) hereof.

"Exchange Act" shall mean the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended.

"Exchange Ratio" shall have the meaning set forth in Section 24 hereof.

"Exempt Person" shall mean the Company, any Subsidiary of the Company, any employee benefit plan of the Company or of any Subsidiary of the Company, and any Person organized, appointed or established by the Company for or pursuant to the terms of any such plan or for the purpose of funding any such plan or funding other employee benefits for employees of the Company or any Subsidiary of the Company.

"Expiration Date" shall mean the earliest of (i) the Final Expiration Date, (ii) the time at which the Rights are redeemed as provided in Section 23 hereof, (iii) the time at which the Rights expire pursuant to Section 13(d) hereof and (iv) the time at which all Rights then outstanding and exercisable are exchanged pursuant to Section 24 hereof.

"Final Expiration Date" shall mean the close of business on December 31, 2011.

"Flip-In Event" shall mean an event described in Section 11(a)(ii) hereof.

"Flip-In Trigger Date" shall have the meaning set forth in Section 11(a)(iii) hereof.

"Flip-Over Event" shall mean any event described in clause (x), (y) or (z) of Section 13(a) hereof, but excluding any transaction described in Section 13(d) hereof that causes the Rights to expire.

"Fractional Share" with respect to the Preferred Stock shall mean one one-thousandth of a share of Preferred Stock.

"Merger" shall have the meaning set forth in the recitals clause at the beginning of this Agreement.

"Merger Agreement" shall have the meaning set forth in the recitals clause at the beginning of this Agreement.

"Nasdaq" shall mean the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc. Automated Quotations System.

"Original Rights" shall have the meaning set forth in the definition of "Beneficial Owner."

"Permitted Offer" shall mean a tender offer or an exchange offer for all outstanding shares of Common Stock at a price and on terms determined, prior to the time the Person making the offer or any Affiliate or Associate thereof is an Acquiring Person, by at least a majority of the members of the Board of Directors who are not, and are not representatives, nominees, Affiliates or Associates of, an Acquiring Person or the Person making the offer, after receiving advice from one or more investment banking firms, to be (a) at a price and on terms that are fair to shareholders (taking into account all factors that such members of the Board deem relevant including, without limitation, prices that could reasonably be achieved if the Company or its assets were sold on an orderly basis designed to realize maximum value) and (b) otherwise in the best interests of the Company and its shareholders.

"Person" shall mean any individual, firm, corporation, partnership, limited liability company, association, trust, unincorporated organization or other entity or any group of Persons acting in concert.

"Preferred Stock" shall mean shares of Series A Preferred Stock, without par value, of the Company having the rights, powers and preferences set forth in the Company's Statement of Resolution Establishing Series of Shares designated Series A Preferred Stock, a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A and, to the extent that there is not a sufficient number of shares of Series A Preferred Stock authorized to permit the full exercise of the Rights, any other series of Preferred Stock, without par value, of the Company designated for such purpose containing terms substantially similar to the terms of the Series A Preferred Stock.

"Principal Party" shall have the meaning set forth in Section 13(b) hereof.

"Purchase Price" shall have the meaning set forth in Section 4(a) hereof.

"Redemption Price" shall have the meaning set forth in Section 23(a) hereof.

"Rights" shall have the meaning set forth in the recitals clause at the beginning of this Agreement.

"Rights Agent" shall mean the Person named as the "Rights Agent" in the preamble of this Agreement until a successor Rights Agent shall have become such pursuant to the applicable provisions hereof, and thereafter "Rights Agent" shall mean such successor Rights Agent. If at any time there is more than one Person appointed by the Company as Rights Agent pursuant to the applicable provisions of this Agreement, "Rights Agent" shall mean and include each such Person.

"Rights Certificates" shall mean the certificates evidencing the Rights.

"Securities Act" shall mean the Securities Act of 1933, as amended.

"Spread" shall have the meaning set forth in Section 11(a)(iii) hereof.

"Stock Acquisition Date" shall mean the first date of public announcement (which, for purposes of this definition and Section 23, shall include, without limitation, a report filed pursuant to Section 13(d) of the Exchange Act) by the Company or an Acquiring Person that an Acquiring Person has become such.

"Subsidiary" shall mean, with reference to any Person, any corporation or other Person of which an amount of voting securities sufficient to elect at least a majority of the directors or other persons performing similar functions is beneficially owned, directly or indirectly, by such Person, or otherwise controlled by such Person.

"Substitution Period" shall have the meaning set forth in Section 11(a)(iii) hereof.

"Summary of Rights" shall mean the Summary of Rights sent pursuant to Section 3(b) hereof.

"Trading Day" with respect to a security shall mean a day on which the principal national securities exchange on which such security is listed or admitted to trading is open for the transaction of business, or, if such security is not listed or admitted to trading on any national securities exchange but is quoted by Nasdaq, a day on which Nasdaq reports trades, or, if such security is not so quoted, a Business Day.

"Triggering Event" shall mean any Flip-In Event or any Flip-Over Event.

Section 2. Appointment of Rights Agent. The Company hereby appoints the Rights Agent (i) to act as agent for the Company and (ii) to take certain actions in respect of the holders of the Rights (who, in accordance with Section 3 hereof, shall prior to the Distribution Date also be the holders of the Common Stock) (although it is expressly agreed that the Rights Agent shall not act as agent for such holders) in accordance with the terms and conditions hereof, and the Rights Agent hereby accepts such appointment. The Company may from time to time appoint such Co-Rights Agents as it may deem necessary or desirable.

Section 3. Issue of Rights Certificates.

(a) Until the Distribution Date, (x) the Rights will be evidenced (subject to the provisions of paragraph (b) of this Section 3) by the certificates for Common Stock registered in

the names of the holders of the Common Stock and not by separate certificates, and (y) the Rights will be transferable only in connection with the transfer of the underlying shares of Common Stock (including a transfer to the Company). As soon as practicable after the Distribution Date, the Rights Agent will send by first-class, insured, postage prepaid mail, to each record holder of the Common Stock as of the close of business on the Distribution Date (other than any Person referred to in the first sentence of Section 7(e)), at the address of such holder shown on the records of the Company, one or more Rights Certificates, evidencing one Right for each share of Common Stock so held, subject to adjustment as provided herein. In the event that an adjustment in the number of Rights per share of Common Stock has been made pursuant to Section 11(p) hereof, at the time of distribution of the Rights Certificates, the Company shall make the necessary and appropriate rounding adjustments (in accordance with Section 14(a) hereof) so that Rights Certificates representing only whole numbers of Rights are distributed and cash is paid in lieu of any fractional Rights. As of and after the Distribution Date, the Rights will be evidenced solely by such Rights Certificates.

(b) Promptly following the Effective Time, the Company will make available, upon request of any record holder of Common Stock, a copy of a Summary of Rights, in substantially the form attached hereto as Exhibit C, by first-class, postage prepaid mail. With respect to certificates for Common Stock outstanding as of the Effective Time, until the Distribution Date or the earlier surrender for transfer thereof or the Expiration Date, the Rights associated with the shares of Common Stock represented by such certificates shall be evidenced by such certificates for Common Stock, and the registered holders of the Common Stock shall also be the registered holders of the associated Rights. Until the earlier of the Distribution Date or the Expiration Date, the transfer of any of the certificates for Common Stock outstanding at the Effective Time, with or without a copy of the Summary of Rights, shall also constitute the transfer of the Rights associated with the Common Stock represented by such certificates.

(c) Rights shall be issued in respect of all shares of Common Stock that are issued (whether originally issued or delivered from the Company's treasury) after the Effective Time but prior to the earlier of the Distribution Date or the Expiration Date or, in certain circumstances provided in Section 22 hereof, after the Distribution Date. Certificates issued for shares of Common Stock that shall so become outstanding or shall be transferred or exchanged after the Effective Time but prior to the earlier of the Distribution Date or the Expiration Date shall also be deemed to be certificates for Rights, and shall bear the following legend:

This certificate also evidences and entitles the holder hereof to certain Rights as set forth in the Rights Agreement between CenterPoint Energy, Inc. (the "Company") and JPMorgan Chase Bank (the "Rights Agent") dated as of January 1, 2002 as it may from time to time be supplemented or amended (the "Rights Agreement"), the terms of which are hereby incorporated herein by reference and a copy of which is on file at the principal offices of the Company. Under certain circumstances, as set forth in the Rights Agreement, such Rights may be redeemed, may be exchanged, may expire or may be evidenced by separate certificates and will no longer be evidenced by this certificate. The Company will mail to the holder of this certificate a copy of the Rights Agreement, as in effect on the date of mailing, without charge promptly after receipt of a written request therefor. UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES SET FORTH IN THE RIGHTS AGREEMENT,

RIGHTS BENEFICIALLY OWNED BY OR TRANSFERRED TO ANY PERSON WHO IS, WAS OR BECOMES AN ACQUIRING PERSON OR AN AFFILIATE OR ASSOCIATE THEREOF (AS SUCH TERMS ARE DEFINED IN THE RIGHTS AGREEMENT), AND CERTAIN TRANSFEREES THEREOF, WILL BECOME NULL AND VOID AND WILL NO LONGER BE TRANSFERABLE.

With respect to such certificates containing the foregoing legend, until the earlier of the Distribution Date or the Expiration Date, the Rights associated with the Common Stock represented by such certificates shall be evidenced by such certificates alone, and registered holders of Common Stock shall also be the registered holders of the associated Rights, and the transfer of any of such certificates shall also constitute the transfer of the Rights associated with the Common Stock represented by such certificates.

Section 4. Form of Rights Certificates.

(a) The Rights Certificates (and the forms of election to purchase and of assignment to be printed on the reverse thereof), when, as and if issued, shall be substantially in the form set forth in Exhibit B hereto and may have such marks of identification or designation and such legends, summaries or endorsements printed thereon as the Company may deem appropriate and as are not inconsistent with the provisions of this Agreement, or as may be required to comply with any applicable law or with any rule or regulation made pursuant thereto or with any rule or regulation of any stock exchange or quotation system on which the Rights may from time to time be listed or quoted, or to conform to usage. Subject to the provisions of Section 11 and Section 22 hereof, the Rights Certificates, whenever issued, shall be dated as of the Effective Time and on their face shall entitle the holders thereof to purchase such number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock as shall be set forth therein at the price set forth therein (such exercise price per Fractional Share (or, as set forth in this Agreement, for other securities), the "Purchase Price"), but the amount and type of securities purchasable upon the exercise of each Right and the Purchase Price thereof shall be subject to adjustment as provided herein.

(b) Any Rights Certificate issued pursuant to Section 3(a) or Section 22 hereof that represents Rights beneficially owned by a Person described in the first sentence of Section 7(e), and any Rights Certificate issued pursuant to Section 6 or Section 11 hereof upon transfer, exchange, replacement or adjustment of any such Rights, shall contain (to the extent feasible) the following legend, modified as applicable to apply to such Person:

The Rights represented by this Rights Certificate are or were beneficially owned by a Person who was or became an Acquiring Person or an Affiliate or Associate of an Acquiring Person (as such terms are defined in the Rights Agreement). Accordingly, this Rights Certificate and the Rights represented hereby [will] [have] become null and void in the circumstances and with the effect specified in Section 7(e) of such Agreement.

The provisions of Section 7(e) of this Agreement shall be operative whether or not the foregoing legend is contained on any such Rights Certificate. The Company shall give notice to the Rights Agent promptly after it becomes aware of the existence of any Acquiring Person or any Associate or Affiliate thereof.

Section 5. Countersignature and Registration.

(a) The Rights Certificates shall be executed on behalf of the Company by its Chairman of the Board, its President or any Vice President, either manually or by facsimile signature, and shall have affixed thereto the Company's seal or a facsimile thereof, which shall be attested by the Secretary or an Assistant Secretary of the Company, either manually or by facsimile signature. The Rights Certificates shall be countersigned by the Rights Agent, either manually or by facsimile signature, and shall not be valid for any purpose unless so countersigned. In case any officer of the Company who shall have signed any of the Rights Certificates shall cease to be such officer of the Company before countersignature by the Rights Agent and issuance and delivery by the Company, such Rights Certificates, nevertheless, may be countersigned by the Rights Agent and issued and delivered by the Company with the same force and effect as though the person who signed such Rights Certificates had not ceased to be such officer of the Company; and any Rights Certificate may be signed on behalf of the Company by any person who, at the actual date of the execution of such Rights Certificate, shall be a proper officer of the Company to sign such Rights Certificate, although at the date of the execution of this Rights Agreement any such person was not such an officer.

(b) Following the Distribution Date, the Rights Agent will keep or cause to be kept, at the office or offices designated by the Rights Agent as the appropriate place for surrender of Rights Certificates upon exercise or transfer, books for registration and transfer of the Rights Certificates issued hereunder. Such books shall show the names and addresses of the respective holders of the Rights Certificates, the number of Rights evidenced on its face by each of the Rights Certificates and the certificate number and the date of each of the Rights Certificates.

Section 6. Transfer, Split-Up, Combination and Exchange of Rights Certificates; Mutilated, Destroyed, Lost or Stolen Rights Certificates.

(a) Subject to the provisions of Section 4(b), Section 7(e), Section 13(d), Section 14 and Section 24 hereof, at any time after the close of business on the Distribution Date, and at or prior to the close of business on the Expiration Date, any Rights Certificate or Rights Certificates may be transferred, split up, combined or exchanged for another Rights Certificate or Rights Certificates, entitling the registered holder to purchase a like number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock (or, following a Triggering Event, Common Stock, other securities, cash or other assets, as the case may be) as the Rights Certificate or Rights Certificates surrendered then entitled such holder (or former holder in the case of a transfer) to purchase. Any registered holder desiring to transfer, split up, combine or exchange any Rights Certificate or Rights Certificates shall make such request in writing delivered to the Rights Agent, and shall surrender the Rights Certificate or Rights Certificates to be transferred, split up, combined or exchanged at the office or offices designated by the Rights Agent for such purpose. Neither the Rights Agent nor the Company shall be obligated to take any action whatsoever with respect to the transfer of any such surrendered Rights Certificate until the registered holder shall have completed and signed the certificate contained in the form of assignment on the reverse side of such Rights Certificate and shall have provided such additional evidence of the identity of the Beneficial Owner (or former Beneficial Owner) thereof or of the Affiliates or Associates thereof as the Company shall reasonably request. Thereupon the Rights Agent shall, subject to Section 4(b),

Section 7(e), Section 13(d), Section 14 and Section 24 hereof, countersign and deliver to the Person entitled thereto a Rights Certificate or Rights Certificates, as the case may be, as so requested. The Company may require payment by the holder of a sum sufficient to cover any tax or governmental charge that may be imposed in connection with any transfer, split-up, combination or exchange of Rights Certificates.

(b) Upon receipt by the Company and the Rights Agent of evidence reasonably satisfactory to them of the loss, theft, destruction or mutilation of a Rights Certificate, and, in case of loss, theft or destruction, of indemnity or security reasonably satisfactory to them, and reimbursement to the Company and the Rights Agent of all reasonable expenses incidental thereto, and upon surrender to the Rights Agent and cancellation of the Rights Certificate if mutilated, the Company will, subject to Section 4(b), Section 7(e), Section 13(d), Section 14 and Section 24, execute and deliver a new Rights Certificate of like tenor to the Rights Agent for countersignature and delivery to the registered owner in lieu of the Rights Certificate so lost, stolen, destroyed or mutilated.

Section 7. Exercise of Rights; Purchase Price.

(a) Subject to Section 7(e) hereof, the registered holder of any Rights Certificate may exercise the Rights evidenced thereby (except as otherwise provided herein including, without limitation, the restrictions on exercisability set forth in Section 9(c), Section 11(a)(iii) and Section 23(a) hereof) in whole or in part at any time after the Distribution Date upon surrender of the Rights Certificate, with the form of election to purchase and the certificate on the reverse side thereof duly completed and executed, to the Rights Agent at the office or offices designated by the Rights Agent for such purpose, together with payment of the aggregate Purchase Price with respect to the total number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock (or other securities, cash or other assets, as the case may be) as to which such surrendered Rights are then exercisable, at or prior to the Expiration Date.

(b) The Purchase Price for each Fractional Share of Preferred Stock pursuant to the exercise of a Right shall initially be \$42.50, and shall be subject to adjustment from time to time as provided in Sections 11 and 13(a) hereof and shall be payable in accordance with paragraph (c) below.

(c) Upon receipt of a Rights Certificate representing exercisable Rights, with the form of election to purchase and the certificate on the reverse side thereof duly executed, accompanied by payment, with respect to each Right so exercised, of the Purchase Price per Fractional Share of Preferred Stock (or other shares, securities, cash or other assets, as the case may be) to be purchased as set forth below and an amount equal to any applicable transfer tax, the Rights Agent shall, subject to Section 20(k) hereof, thereupon promptly (i)(A) requisition from any transfer agent of the shares of Preferred Stock (or make available, if the Rights Agent is the transfer agent for such shares) certificates for the total number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock to be purchased, and the Company hereby irrevocably authorizes its transfer agent to comply with all such requests, or (B) if the Company, in its sole discretion, shall have elected to deposit the shares of Preferred Stock issuable upon exercise of the Rights hereunder with a depository agent, requisition from the depository agent depository receipts representing interests in such number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock as are to be purchased (in which

case certificates for the shares of Preferred Stock represented by such receipts shall be deposited by the transfer agent with the depositary agent) and the Company will direct the depositary agent to comply with such request, (ii) requisition from the Company the amount of cash, if any, to be paid in lieu of fractional shares in accordance with Section 14 hereof, (iii) after receipt of such certificates or depositary receipts, cause the same to be delivered to or upon the order of the registered holder of such Rights Certificate, registered in such name or names as may be designated by such holder and (iv) after receipt thereof, deliver such cash, if any, to or upon the order of the registered holder of such Rights Certificate. The payment of the Purchase Price (as such amount may be reduced pursuant to Section 11(a)(iii) hereof) may be made in cash or by certified check, cashier's or official bank check or bank draft payable to the order of the Company or the Rights Agent. In the event that the Company is obligated to issue other securities (including Common Stock) of the Company, pay cash and/or distribute other property pursuant to Section 11(a) or Section 13(a) hereof, the Company will make all arrangements necessary so that such other securities, cash and/or other property are available for distribution by the Rights Agent, if and when appropriate. The Company reserves the right to require prior to the occurrence of a Triggering Event that, upon exercise of Rights, a number of Rights be exercised so that only whole shares of Preferred Stock would be issued.

(d) In case the registered holder of any Rights Certificate shall exercise fewer than all the Rights evidenced thereby, a new Rights Certificate evidencing Rights equivalent to the Rights remaining unexercised shall be issued by the Rights Agent and delivered to, or upon the order of, the registered holder of such Rights Certificate, registered in such name or names as may be designated by such holder, subject to the provisions of Section 14 hereof.

(e) Notwithstanding anything in this Agreement to the contrary, from and after the first occurrence of a Triggering Event, any Rights beneficially owned by or transferred to (i) an Acquiring Person or an Associate or Affiliate of an Acquiring Person other than any such Person that became such pursuant to a Permitted Offer and the Board of Directors in good faith determines was not involved in and did not cause or facilitate, directly or indirectly, such Triggering Event, (ii) a direct or indirect transferee of such Rights from such Acquiring Person (or any such Associate or Affiliate) who becomes a transferee after such Triggering Event or (iii) a direct or indirect transferee of such Acquiring Person (or of any such Associate or Affiliate) who becomes a transferee prior to or concurrently with such Triggering Event and receives such Rights pursuant to either (A) a transfer (whether or not for consideration) from such Acquiring Person (or such Affiliate or Associate) to holders of equity interests in such Acquiring Person (or such Affiliate or Associate) or to any Person with whom such Acquiring Person (or such Affiliate or Associate) has any continuing agreement, arrangement or understanding regarding the transferred Rights or (B) a transfer that the Board of Directors of the Company determines is part of a plan, arrangement or understanding that has as a primary purpose or effect the avoidance of this Section 7(e), shall become null and void without any further action, no holder of such Rights shall have any rights whatsoever with respect to such Rights, whether under any provision of this Agreement or otherwise, and such Rights shall not be transferable. The Company shall use all reasonable efforts to ensure that the provisions of this Section 7(e) and Section 4(b) hereof are complied with, but shall have no liability to any holder of Rights Certificates or other Person as a result of its failure to make any determinations with respect to an Acquiring Person or its Affiliates, Associates or transferees hereunder.

(f) Notwithstanding anything in this Agreement to the contrary, neither the Rights Agent nor the Company shall be obligated to undertake any action with respect to a registered holder upon the occurrence of any purported exercise as set forth in this Section 7 unless such registered holder shall have (i) completed and signed the certificate contained in the form of election to purchase set forth on the reverse side of the Rights Certificate surrendered for such exercise and (ii) provided such additional evidence of the identity of the Beneficial Owner (or former Beneficial Owner) or Affiliates or Associates thereof as the Company shall reasonably request.

Section 8. Cancellation and Destruction of Rights Certificates. All Rights Certificates surrendered for the purpose of exercise, transfer, split-up, combination or exchange shall, if surrendered to the Company or any of its agents, be delivered to the Rights Agent for cancellation or in canceled form, or, if surrendered to the Rights Agent, shall be canceled by it, and no Rights Certificates shall be issued in lieu thereof except as expressly permitted by any of the provisions of this Agreement. The Company shall deliver to the Rights Agent for cancellation and retirement, and the Rights Agent shall so cancel and retire, any other Rights Certificate purchased or acquired by the Company otherwise than upon the exercise thereof. The Rights Agent shall deliver all canceled Rights Certificates to the Company, or shall, at the written request of the Company, destroy such canceled Rights Certificates, and in such case shall deliver a certificate of destruction thereof to the Company.

Section 9. Reservation and Availability of Capital Stock.

(a) The Company covenants and agrees that it will cause to be reserved and kept available out of its authorized and unissued shares of Preferred Stock (and, following the occurrence of a Triggering Event, out of its authorized and unissued shares of Common Stock and/or other securities or out of its authorized and issued shares held in its treasury), the number of shares of Preferred Stock (and, following the occurrence of a Triggering Event, Common Stock and/or other securities) that, as provided in this Agreement, including Section 11(a)(iii) hereof, will be sufficient to permit the exercise in full of all outstanding Rights.

(b) So long as any shares of Preferred Stock (and, following the occurrence of a Triggering Event, Common Stock and/or other securities) issuable and deliverable upon the exercise of the Rights are listed on any national securities exchange or quoted on any trading system, the Company shall use its best efforts to cause, from and after such time as the Rights become exercisable, all shares reserved for such issuance to be listed on such exchange, or quoted on such system, upon official notice of issuance upon such exercise. Following the occurrence of a Triggering Event, the Company will use its best efforts to list (or continue the listing of) the Rights and the securities issuable and deliverable upon the exercise of the Rights on one or more national securities exchanges or to cause the Rights and the securities purchasable upon exercise of the Rights to be reported by Nasdaq or such other transaction reporting system then in use.

(c) The Company shall use its best efforts to (i) prepare and file, as soon as practicable following the first occurrence of a Flip-In Event or, if applicable, as soon as practicable following the earliest date after the first occurrence of a Flip-In Event on which the consideration to be delivered by the Company upon exercise of the Rights has been determined

pursuant to this Agreement (including in accordance with Section 11(a)(iii) hereof), a registration statement on an appropriate form under the Securities Act with respect to the securities purchasable upon exercise of the Rights, (ii) cause such registration statement to become effective as soon as practicable after such filing, and (iii) cause such registration statement to remain effective (with a prospectus at all times meeting the requirements of the Securities Act) until the earlier of (A) the date as of which the Rights are no longer exercisable for such securities and (B) the Expiration Date. The Company will also take such action as may be appropriate under, or to ensure compliance with, the securities or "blue sky" laws of the various states in connection with the exercisability of the Rights. The Company may temporarily suspend, for a period of time not to exceed 90 days after the date set forth in clause (i) of the first sentence of this Section 9(c), the exercisability of the Rights in order to prepare and file such registration statement and permit it to become effective. In addition, if the Company shall determine that the Securities Act requires an effective registration statement under the Securities Act following the Distribution Date, the Company may temporarily suspend the exercisability of the Rights until such time as such a registration statement has been declared effective. Upon any such suspension, the Company shall issue a public announcement stating that the exercisability of the Rights has been temporarily suspended, as well as a public announcement at such time as the suspension is no longer in effect. Notwithstanding any provision of this Agreement to the contrary, the Rights shall not be exercisable in any jurisdiction if the requisite qualification in such jurisdiction shall not have been obtained, the exercise thereof shall not be permitted under applicable law or any required registration statement shall not have been declared effective.

(d) The Company covenants and agrees that it will take all such action as may be necessary to ensure that all Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock (and, following the occurrence of a Triggering Event, Common Stock and/or other securities) delivered upon exercise of Rights shall, at the time of delivery of the certificates for such shares (subject to payment of the Purchase Price), be duly and validly authorized and issued and fully paid and nonassessable.

(e) The Company further covenants and agrees that it will pay when due and payable any and all federal and state transfer taxes and charges that may be payable in respect of the issuance or delivery of the Rights Certificates and of any certificates for a number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock (or Common Stock and/or other securities, as the case may be) upon the exercise of Rights. The Company shall not, however, be required to pay any transfer tax that may be payable in respect of any transfer or delivery of Rights Certificates to a Person other than, or the issuance or delivery of a number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock (or Common Stock and/or other securities, as the case may be) in respect of a name other than that of, the registered holder of the Rights Certificates evidencing Rights surrendered for exercise or to issue or deliver any certificates for a number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock (or Common Stock and/or other securities, as the case may be) in a name other than that of the registered holder upon the exercise of any Rights until such tax shall have been paid (any such tax being payable by the holder of such Rights Certificate at the time of surrender) or until it has been established to the Company's satisfaction that no such tax is due.

Section 10. Preferred Stock Record Date. Each Person in whose name any certificate for a number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock (or Common Stock and/or other securities, as the case may be) is issued upon the exercise of Rights shall for all purposes be

deemed to have become the holder of record of such shares (fractional or otherwise) of Preferred Stock (or Common Stock and/or other securities, as the case may be) represented thereby on, and such certificate shall be dated, the date upon which the Rights Certificate evidencing such Rights was duly surrendered and payment of the Purchase Price (and all applicable transfer taxes) was made; provided, however, that if the date of such surrender and payment is a date upon which the Preferred Stock (or Common Stock and/or other securities, as the case may be) transfer books of the Company are closed, such Person shall be deemed to have become the record holder of such shares (fractional or otherwise) on, and such certificate shall be dated, the next succeeding Business Day on which the Preferred Stock (or Common Stock and/or other securities, as the case may be) transfer books of the Company are open. Prior to the exercise of the Rights evidenced thereby, the holder of a Rights Certificate, as such, shall not be entitled to any rights of a shareholder of the Company with respect to shares for which the Rights shall be exercisable, including, without limitation, the right to vote, to receive dividends or other distributions or to exercise any preemptive rights, and shall not be entitled to receive any notice of any proceedings of the Company, except as provided herein.

Section 11. Adjustment of Purchase Price, Number and Kind of Shares or Number of Rights. The Purchase Price, the number and kind of shares or other securities subject to purchase upon exercise of each Right and the number of Rights outstanding are subject to adjustment from time to time as provided in this Section 11.

(a)(i) In the event the Company shall at any time after the Effective Time (A) declare a dividend on the outstanding shares of Preferred Stock payable in shares of Preferred Stock, (B) subdivide the outstanding shares of Preferred Stock, (C) combine the outstanding shares of Preferred Stock into a smaller number of shares or (D) otherwise reclassify the outstanding shares of Preferred Stock (including any such reclassification in connection with a consolidation or merger in which the Company is the continuing or surviving corporation), except as otherwise provided in this Section 11(a) and Section 7(e) hereof, the Purchase Price in effect at the time of the record date for such dividend or of the effective date of such subdivision, combination or reclassification, and the number and kind of shares of Preferred Stock or capital stock or other securities, as the case may be, issuable on such date, shall be proportionately adjusted so that the holder of any Right exercised after such time shall be entitled to receive, upon payment of the Purchase Price then in effect, the aggregate number and kind of shares of Preferred Stock or capital stock or other securities, as the case may be, which, if such Right had been exercised immediately prior to such date and at a time when the Preferred Stock transfer books of the Company were open, he would have owned upon such exercise and been entitled to receive by virtue of such dividend, subdivision, combination or reclassification. If an event occurs that would require an adjustment under both this Section 11(a)(i) and Section 11(a)(ii) hereof, the adjustment provided for in this Section 11(a)(i) shall be in addition to, and shall be made prior to, any adjustment required pursuant to Section 11(a)(ii) hereof.

(ii) Subject to Sections 23 and 24 of this Agreement, in the event any Person shall, at any time after the Effective Time, become an Acquiring Person, unless the event causing such Person to become an Acquiring Person is (1) a Flip-Over Event or (2) an acquisition of shares of Common Stock pursuant to a Permitted Offer (provided

that this clause (2) shall cease to apply if such Acquiring Person thereafter becomes the Beneficial Owner of any additional shares of Common Stock other than pursuant to such Permitted Offer or a transaction set forth in Section 13(a) or 13(d) hereof), then, unless applicable law prohibits the enforcement of the first sentence of Section 7(e), (x) the Purchase Price shall be adjusted to be the Purchase Price immediately prior to the first occurrence of a Flip-In Event multiplied by the number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock for which a Right was exercisable immediately prior to such first occurrence and (y) each holder of a Right (except as provided below in Section 11(a)(iii) and in Section 7(e) hereof) shall thereafter have the right to receive, upon exercise thereof at a price equal to the Purchase Price in accordance with the terms of this Agreement, in lieu of the shares of Preferred Stock otherwise purchasable hereunder, such number of shares of Common Stock of the Company as shall equal the result obtained by dividing the Purchase Price by 50% of the Current Market Price per share of Common Stock on the date of such first occurrence (such number of shares, the "Adjustment Shares"); provided that the Purchase Price and the number of Adjustment Shares shall be further adjusted as provided in this Agreement to reflect any events occurring after the date of such first occurrence.

(iii) In the event that the number of shares of Common Stock that are authorized by the Company's articles of incorporation but not outstanding or reserved for issuance for purposes other than upon exercise of the Rights is not sufficient to permit the exercise in full of the Rights in accordance with the foregoing subparagraph (ii) of this Section 11(a), the Company shall, to the extent permitted by applicable law and regulation, (A) determine the excess of (1) the value of the Adjustment Shares issuable upon the exercise of a Right (computed using the Current Market Price used to determine the number of Adjustment Shares) (the "Current Value") over (2) the Purchase Price (such excess is herein referred to as the "Spread"), and (B) with respect to each Right, make adequate provision to substitute for the Adjustment Shares, upon the exercise of the Rights and payment of the applicable Purchase Price, (1) cash, (2) a reduction in the Purchase Price, (3) Common Stock or other equity securities of the Company (including, without limitation, shares, or units of shares, of preferred stock (including, without limitation, the Preferred Stock) that the Board of Directors of the Company has determined to have the same value as shares of Common Stock (such shares of preferred stock are herein referred to as "Common Stock Equivalents")), (4) debt securities of the Company, (5) other assets or (6) any combination of the foregoing, having an aggregate value equal to the Current Value, where such aggregate value has been determined by the Board of Directors of the Company based upon the advice of a nationally recognized investment banking firm selected by the Board of Directors of the Company; provided, however, if the Company shall not have made adequate provision to deliver value pursuant to clause (B) above within 30 days following the first occurrence of a Flip-In Event (the "Flip-In Trigger Date"), then the Company shall be obligated to deliver, upon the surrender for exercise of a Right and without requiring payment of the Purchase Price, shares of Common Stock (to the extent available) and then, if necessary, cash, which shares and/or cash have an aggregate value equal to the Spread. If the Board of Directors of the Company shall determine in good faith that it is likely that sufficient additional shares of Common Stock could be authorized for issuance upon exercise in full

of the Rights, the 30-day period set forth above may be extended to the extent necessary, but not more than 90 days after the Flip-In Trigger Date, in order that the Company may seek shareholder approval for the authorization of such additional shares (such period, as it may be extended, the "Substitution Period"). To the extent that the Company or the Board of Directors determines that some action need be taken pursuant to the first and/or second sentences of this Section 11(a)(iii), the Company (x) shall provide, subject to Section 7(e) hereof, that such action shall apply uniformly to all outstanding Rights, and (y) may suspend the exercisability of the Rights until the expiration of the Substitution Period in order to seek any authorization of additional shares and/or to decide the appropriate form of distribution to be made pursuant to such first sentence and to determine the value thereof. In the event of any such suspension, the Company shall issue a public announcement stating that the exercisability of the Rights has been temporarily suspended, as well as a public announcement at such time as the suspension is no longer in effect. For purposes of this Section 11(a)(iii), the value of the Common Stock shall be the Current Market Price per share of the Common Stock on the Flip-In Trigger Date and the value of any Common Stock Equivalent shall be deemed to have the same value as the Common Stock on such date.

(b) In case the Company shall fix a record date for the issuance of rights, options or warrants to all holders of Preferred Stock entitling them to subscribe for or purchase (for a period expiring within 45 calendar days after such record date) Preferred Stock (or shares having substantially the same rights, privileges and preferences as the shares of Preferred Stock ("Equivalent Preferred Stock")) or securities convertible into Preferred Stock or Equivalent Preferred Stock at a price per share of Preferred Stock or per share of Equivalent Preferred Stock (or having a conversion price per share, if a security convertible into Preferred Stock or Equivalent Preferred Stock) less than the Current Market Price per share of Preferred Stock on such record date, the Purchase Price to be in effect after such record date shall be determined by multiplying the Purchase Price in effect immediately prior to such record date by a fraction, the numerator of which shall be the number of shares of Preferred Stock outstanding on such record date, plus the number of shares of Preferred Stock that the aggregate offering price of the total number of shares of Preferred Stock and/or Equivalent Preferred Stock so to be offered (and/or the aggregate initial conversion price of the convertible securities so to be offered) would purchase at such Current Market Price, and the denominator of which shall be the number of shares of Preferred Stock outstanding on such record date, plus the number of additional shares of Preferred Stock and/or Equivalent Preferred Stock to be offered for subscription or purchase (or into which the convertible securities so to be offered are initially convertible). In case such subscription price may be paid by delivery of consideration, part or all of which may be in a form other than cash, the value of such consideration shall be as determined in good faith by the Board of Directors of the Company, whose determination shall be described in a statement filed with the Rights Agent and shall be binding on the Rights Agent and the holders of the Rights. Shares of Preferred Stock owned by or held for the account of the Company shall not be deemed outstanding for the purpose of any such computation. Such adjustment shall be made successively whenever such a record date is fixed, and in the event that such rights or warrants are not so issued, the Purchase Price shall be adjusted to be the Purchase Price that would then be in effect if such record date had not been fixed.

(c) In case the Company shall fix a record date for a distribution to all holders of Preferred Stock (including any such distribution made in connection with a consolidation or merger in which the Company is the continuing or surviving corporation) of evidences of indebtedness, cash (other than a regular quarterly cash dividend out of the earnings or retained earnings of the Company), assets (other than a dividend payable in Preferred Stock, but including any dividend payable in stock other than Preferred Stock) or subscription rights or warrants (excluding those referred to in Section 11(b) hereof), the Purchase Price to be in effect after such record date shall be determined by multiplying the Purchase Price in effect immediately prior to such record date by a fraction, the numerator of which shall be the Current Market Price per share of Preferred Stock on such record date, less the fair market value (as determined in good faith by the Board of Directors of the Company, whose determination shall be described in a statement filed with the Rights Agent and shall be binding on the Rights Agent) of the portion of the cash, assets or evidences of indebtedness so to be distributed or of such subscription rights or warrants applicable to a share of Preferred Stock and the denominator of which shall be such Current Market Price per share of Preferred Stock. Such adjustments shall be made successively whenever such a record date is fixed, and in the event that such distribution is not so made, the Purchase Price shall be adjusted to be the Purchase Price that would have been in effect if such record date had not been fixed.

(d)(i) For the purpose of any computation hereunder, other than computations made pursuant to Section 11(a)(iii) hereof, the "Current Market Price" per share of Common Stock of a Person on any date shall be deemed to be the average of the daily Closing Prices per share of such Common Stock for the 30 consecutive Trading Days immediately prior to such date, and for purposes of computations made pursuant to Section 11(a)(iii) hereof, the "Current Market Price" per share of Common Stock on any date shall be deemed to be the average of the daily Closing Prices per share of such Common Stock for the 10 consecutive Trading Days immediately following such date; provided, however, that in the event that the Current Market Price per share of Common Stock is determined during a period following the announcement of (A) a dividend or distribution on such Common Stock other than a regular quarterly cash dividend or the dividend of the Rights, or (B) any subdivision, combination or reclassification of such Common Stock, and the ex-dividend date for such dividend or distribution, or the record date for such subdivision, combination or reclassification, shall not have occurred prior to the commencement of the requisite 30 Trading Day or 10 Trading Day period, as set forth above, then, and in each such case, the Current Market Price shall be properly adjusted to take into account ex-dividend trading. If the Common Stock is not publicly held or not so listed or traded, "Current Market Price" per share shall mean the fair value per share as determined in good faith by the Board of Directors of the Company, whose determination shall be described in a statement filed with the Rights Agent and shall be conclusive for all purposes.

(ii) For the purpose of any computation hereunder, the "Current Market Price" per share (or Fractional Share) of Preferred Stock shall be determined in the same manner as set forth above for the Common Stock in clause (i) of this Section 11(d) (other than the last sentence thereof). If the Current Market Price per share (or Fractional Share) of Preferred Stock cannot be determined in the manner provided above

or if the Preferred Stock is not publicly held or listed or traded in a manner described in clause (i) of this Section 11(d), the "Current Market Price" per share of Preferred Stock shall be conclusively deemed to be an amount equal to 1000 (as such number may be appropriately adjusted for such events as stock splits, stock dividends and recapitalizations with respect to the Common Stock occurring after the date of this Agreement) multiplied by the Current Market Price per share of the Common Stock. If neither the Common Stock nor the Preferred Stock is publicly held or so listed or traded, Current Market Price per share of the Preferred Stock shall mean the fair value per share as determined in good faith by the Board of Directors of the Company, whose determination shall be described in a statement filed with the Rights Agent and shall be conclusive for all purposes. For all purposes of this Agreement, the Current Market Price of a Fractional Share of Preferred Stock shall be equal to the Current Market Price of one share of Preferred Stock divided by 1000.

(e) Anything herein to the contrary notwithstanding, no adjustment in the Purchase Price shall be required unless such adjustment would require an increase or decrease of at least 1% in the Purchase Price; provided, however, that any adjustments that by reason of this Section 11(e) are not required to be made shall be carried forward and taken into account in any subsequent adjustment. All calculations under this Section 11 shall be made to the nearest cent or to the nearest ten-thousandth of a share of Common Stock or other share or to the nearest ten-thousandth of a Fractional Share of Preferred Stock, as the case may be. Notwithstanding the first sentence of this Section 11(e), any adjustment required by this Section 11 shall be made no later than the earlier of (i) three years from the date of the transaction which mandates such adjustment or (ii) the Expiration Date.

(f) If as a result of an adjustment made pursuant to Section 11(a) or Section 13(a) hereof, the holder of any Right thereafter exercised shall become entitled to receive in respect of such Right any shares of capital stock other than Preferred Stock, thereafter the number of such other shares so receivable upon exercise of any Right and the Purchase Price thereof shall be subject to adjustment from time to time in a manner and on terms as nearly equivalent as practicable to the provisions with respect to the Preferred Stock contained in Sections 11(a), (b), (c), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (k) and (m) hereof, and the provisions of Sections 7, 9, 10, 13 and 14 hereof with respect to the Preferred Stock shall apply on like terms to any such other shares.

(g) All Rights originally issued by the Company subsequent to any adjustment made to the Purchase Price hereunder shall evidence the right to purchase, at the adjusted Purchase Price, the number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock purchasable from time to time hereunder upon exercise of the Rights, all subject to further adjustment as provided herein.

(h) Unless the Company shall have exercised its election as provided in Section 11(i) hereof, upon each adjustment of the Purchase Price as a result of the calculations made in Sections 11(b) and (c) hereof, each Right outstanding immediately prior to the making of such adjustment shall thereafter evidence the right to purchase, at the adjusted Purchase Price, that number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock (calculated to the nearest one ten-thousandth of a Fractional Share) obtained by (i) multiplying (x) the number of Fractional Shares of

Preferred Stock covered by a Right immediately prior to this adjustment by (y) the Purchase Price in effect immediately prior to such adjustment of the Purchase Price, and (ii) dividing the product so obtained by the Purchase Price in effect immediately after such adjustment of the Purchase Price.

(i) The Company may elect, on or after the date of any adjustment of the Purchase Price, to adjust the number of Rights in lieu of any adjustment in the number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock purchasable upon the exercise of a Right. Each of the Rights outstanding after the adjustment in the number of Rights shall be exercisable for the number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock for which a Right was exercisable immediately prior to such adjustment. Each Right held of record prior to such adjustment of the number of Rights shall become that number of Rights (calculated to the nearest ten-thousandth) obtained by dividing the Purchase Price in effect immediately prior to adjustment of the Purchase Price by the Purchase Price in effect immediately after adjustment of the Purchase Price. The Company shall make a public announcement of its election to adjust the number of Rights, indicating the record date for the adjustment, and, if known at the time, the amount of the adjustment to be made. This record date may be the date on which the Purchase Price is adjusted or any day thereafter, but, if the Rights Certificates have been issued, shall be at least 10 days later than the date of the public announcement. If Rights Certificates have been issued, upon each adjustment of the number of Rights pursuant to this Section 11(i), the Company shall, as promptly as practicable, cause to be distributed to holders of record of Rights Certificates on such record date Rights Certificates evidencing, subject to Section 14 hereof, the additional Rights to which such holders shall be entitled as a result of such adjustment, or, at the option of the Company, shall cause to be distributed to such holders of record in substitution and replacement for the Rights Certificates held by such holders prior to the date of adjustment, and upon surrender thereof, if required by the Company, new Rights Certificates evidencing all the Rights to which such holders shall be entitled after such adjustment. Rights Certificates so to be distributed shall be issued, executed and countersigned in the manner provided for herein (and may bear, at the option of the Company, the adjusted Purchase Price) and shall be registered in the names of the holders of record of Rights Certificates on the record date specified in the public announcement.

(j) Irrespective of any adjustment or change in the Purchase Price or the number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock issuable upon the exercise of the Rights, the Rights Certificates theretofore and thereafter issued may continue to express the Purchase Price per Fractional Share and the number of Fractional Shares that were expressed in the initial Rights Certificates issued hereunder.

(k) Before taking any action that would cause an adjustment reducing the Purchase Price below the then par value, if any, or the stated capital of the number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock or of the number of shares of Common Stock or other securities issuable upon exercise of a Right, the Company shall take any corporate action that may, in the opinion of its counsel, be necessary in order that the Company may validly and legally issue fully paid and nonassessable such number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock or such number of shares of Common Stock or other securities at such adjusted Purchase Price.

(l) In any case in which this Section 11 shall require that an adjustment in the Purchase Price be made effective as of a record date for a specified event, the Company may elect to defer until the occurrence of such event the issuance to the holder of any Right exercised after such record date the number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock and other capital stock or securities of the Company, if any, issuable upon such exercise over and above the number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock and other capital stock or securities of the Company, if any, issuable upon such exercise on the basis of the Purchase Price in effect prior to such adjustment; provided, however, that the Company shall deliver to such holder a due bill or other appropriate instrument evidencing such holder's right to receive such additional shares (fractional or otherwise) or securities upon the occurrence of the event requiring such adjustment.

(m) Anything in this Section 11 to the contrary notwithstanding, the Company shall be entitled to make such reductions in the Purchase Price, in addition to those adjustments expressly required by this Section 11, as and to the extent that in their good faith judgment the Board of Directors of the Company shall determine to be advisable in order that any (i) consolidation or subdivision of the Preferred Stock, (ii) issuance wholly for cash of any shares of Preferred Stock at less than the current market price, (iii) issuance wholly for cash of shares of Preferred Stock or securities that by their terms are convertible into or exchangeable for shares of Preferred Stock, (iv) stock dividends or (v) issuance of rights, options or warrants referred to in this Section 11 hereafter made by the Company to holders of its Preferred Stock shall not be taxable to such shareholders.

(n) The Company covenants and agrees that it shall not, at any time that there is an Acquiring Person, (i) consolidate with any other Person, (ii) merge with or into or be acquired pursuant to a share exchange by any other Person, or (iii) sell, lease or transfer (or permit one or more Subsidiaries to sell, lease or transfer), in one transaction or a series of related transactions, assets, earning power or cash flow aggregating more than 50% of the assets, earning power or cash flow of the Company and its Subsidiaries (taken as a whole) to any other Person or Persons, if (x) at the time of or immediately after such consolidation, merger, share exchange, sale, lease or transfer there are any rights, warrants or other instruments or securities of the Company or any other Person outstanding or agreements, arrangements or understandings in effect that would substantially diminish or otherwise eliminate the benefits intended to be afforded by the Rights, (y) prior to, simultaneously with or immediately after such consolidation, merger, share exchange, sale, lease or transfer, the shareholders or other equity owners of the Person who constitutes, or would constitute, the "Principal Party" for purposes of Section 13(a) hereof shall have received a distribution of Rights previously owned by such Person or any of its Affiliates or Associates, or (z) the identity, form or nature of organization of the Principal Party (including without limitation the selection of the Person that will be the Principal Party as a result of the Company's entering into one or more consolidations, mergers, share exchanges, sales, leases, transfers or transactions with more than one party) would preclude or limit the exercise of Rights or otherwise diminish substantially or eliminate the benefits intended to be afforded by the Rights.

(o) The Company covenants and agrees that, after the Distribution Date, it will not, except as permitted by Section 23, Section 24 or Section 27 hereof, take (or permit any Subsidiary to take) any action if the purpose of such action is

to, or if at the time such action is taken it is reasonably foreseeable that such action will, diminish substantially or eliminate the benefits intended to be afforded by the Rights.

(p) Notwithstanding Section 3(c) hereof or any other provision of this Agreement to the contrary, in the event that the Company shall at any time after the Effective Time and prior to the Distribution Date (i) declare a dividend on the outstanding shares of Common Stock payable in shares of Common Stock, (ii) subdivide the outstanding shares of Common Stock, (iii) combine the outstanding shares of Common Stock into a smaller number of shares or (iv) otherwise reclassify the outstanding shares of Common Stock (including any such reclassification in connection with a consolidation or merger in which the Company is the continuing or surviving corporation), the number of Rights associated with each share of Common Stock then outstanding, or issued or delivered thereafter with Rights, shall be proportionately adjusted so that the number of Rights thereafter associated with each share of Common Stock following any such event shall equal the result obtained by multiplying the number of Rights associated with each share of Common Stock immediately prior to such event by a fraction (the "Adjustment Fraction") the numerator of which shall be the total number of shares of Common Stock outstanding immediately prior to the occurrence of the event and the denominator of which shall be the total number of shares of Common Stock outstanding immediately following the occurrence of such event. In lieu of such adjustment in the number of Rights associated with one share of Common Stock, the Company may elect to adjust the number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock purchasable upon the exercise of one Right and the Purchase Price. If the Company makes such election, the number of Rights associated with one share of Common Stock shall remain unchanged, and the number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock purchasable upon exercise of one Right and the Purchase Price shall be proportionately adjusted so that (i) the number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock purchasable upon exercise of a Right following such adjustment shall equal the product of the number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock purchasable upon exercise of a Right immediately prior to such adjustment multiplied by the Adjustment Fraction and (ii) the Purchase Price following such adjustment shall equal the product of the Purchase Price immediately prior to such adjustment multiplied by the Adjustment Fraction.

Section 12. Certificate of Adjusted Purchase Price or Number of Shares. Whenever an adjustment is made as provided in Section 11 or Section 13 hereof, the Company shall (a) promptly prepare a certificate setting forth such adjustment and a brief statement of the facts accounting for such adjustment, (b) promptly file with the Rights Agent, and with each transfer agent for the Preferred Stock and the Common Stock, a copy of such certificate and (c) mail a brief summary thereof to each registered holder of a Rights Certificate (or, if prior to the Distribution Date, to each registered holder of a certificate representing shares of Common Stock) in accordance with Section 26 hereof. The Rights Agent shall be fully protected in relying on any such certificate and on any adjustment therein contained.

Section 13. Consolidation, Merger or Sale or Transfer of Assets, Cash Flow or Earning Power.

(a) In the event that, from and after the time an Acquiring Person has become such, directly or indirectly, (x) the Company shall consolidate with, or merge with and into, any other Person, and the Company shall not be the continuing or surviving corporation of such

consolidation or merger, (y) any Person shall consolidate with, or merge with or into, the Company, and the Company shall be the continuing or surviving corporation of such consolidation or merger, or the Company shall be party to a share exchange, and, in connection with such consolidation or merger or share exchange, all or part of the outstanding shares of Common Stock shall be changed into or exchanged for stock or other securities of the Company or any other Person or cash or any other property, or (z) the Company shall sell, lease or otherwise transfer (or one or more of its Subsidiaries shall sell, lease or otherwise transfer), in one transaction or a series of related transactions, assets, cash flow or earning power aggregating more than 50% of the assets, cash flow or earning power of the Company and its Subsidiaries (taken as a whole) to any Person or Persons (other than the Company or any wholly owned Subsidiary of the Company or any combination thereof in one or more transactions each of which complies (and all of which together comply) with Section 11(o) hereof), then, and in each such case (except as may be contemplated by Section 13(d) hereof), proper provision shall be made so that: (i) the Purchase Price shall be adjusted to be the Purchase Price immediately prior to the first occurrence of a Triggering Event multiplied by the number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock for which a Right was exercisable immediately prior to such first occurrence; (ii) on and after the Distribution Date, each holder of a Right, except as provided in Section 7(e) hereof, shall thereafter have the right to receive, upon the exercise thereof at the Purchase Price in accordance with the terms of this Agreement, in lieu of shares of Preferred Stock or Common Stock of the Company, such number of validly authorized and issued, fully paid, nonassessable and freely tradeable shares of Common Stock of the Principal Party (as such term is hereinafter defined), not subject to any liens, encumbrances, rights of first refusal or other adverse claims, as shall be equal to the result obtained by dividing the Purchase Price by 50% of the Current Market Price per share of the Common Stock of such Principal Party on the date of consummation of such Flip-Over Event; provided that the Purchase Price and the number of shares of Common Stock of such Principal Party issuable upon exercise of each Right shall be further adjusted as provided in this Agreement to reflect any events occurring after the date of such first occurrence of a Triggering Event or after the date of such Flip-Over Event, as applicable; (iii) such Principal Party shall thereafter be liable for, and shall assume, by virtue of such Flip-Over Event, all the obligations and duties of the Company pursuant to this Agreement; (iv) the term "Company" shall thereafter be deemed to refer to such Principal Party, it being specifically intended that the provisions of Section 11 hereof shall apply only to such Principal Party following the first occurrence of a Flip-Over Event; (v) such Principal Party shall take such steps (including, but not limited to, the reservation of a sufficient number of shares of its Common Stock) in connection with the consummation of any such transaction as may be necessary to assure that the provisions hereof shall thereafter be applicable, as nearly as reasonably may be, in relation to its shares of Common Stock thereafter deliverable upon the exercise of the Rights; and (vi) the provisions of Section 11(a)(ii) hereof shall be of no effect following the occurrence of any Flip-Over Event.

(b) "Principal Party" shall mean

(i) in the case of any transaction described in clause (x) or (y) of the first sentence of Section 13(a), (A) the Person that is the issuer of any securities into which shares of Common Stock of the Company are converted in such merger or consolidation or share exchange, or, if there is more than one such issuer, the issuer the Common Stock of which has the greatest aggregate market value, or (B) if no securities are so issued, (x) the Person that survives such consolidation or is the other party to the merger and

survives such merger, or, if there is more than one such Person, the Person the Common Stock of which has the greatest aggregate market value or (y) if the Person that is the other party to the merger does not survive the merger, the Person that does survive the merger (including the Company if it survives); and

(ii) in the case of any transaction described in clause (z) of the first sentence of Section 13(a), the Person that is the party receiving the greatest portion of the assets or earning power transferred pursuant to such transaction or transactions, or, if each Person that is a party to such transaction or transactions receives the same portion of the assets or earning power so transferred, or if the Person receiving the greatest portion of the assets or earning power cannot be determined, the Person the Common Stock of which has the greatest aggregate market value;

provided, however, that in any such case, if the Common Stock of such Person is not at such time and has not been continuously over the preceding twelve-month period registered under Section 12 of the Exchange Act, and if (1) such Person is a direct or indirect Subsidiary of another Person the Common Stock of which is and has been so registered, "Principal Party" shall refer to such other Person; (2) such Person is a Subsidiary, directly or indirectly, of more than one Person, the Common Stocks of all of which are and have been so registered, "Principal Party" shall refer to whichever of such Persons is the issuer of the Common Stock having the greatest aggregate market value; and (3) such Person is owned, directly or indirectly, by a joint venture formed by two or more Persons that are not owned, directly or indirectly, by the same Person, the rules set forth in (1) and (2) above shall apply to each of the chains of ownership having an interest in such joint venture as if such party were a "Subsidiary" of both or all of such joint venturers and the Principal Parties in each such chain shall bear the obligations set forth in this Section 13 in the same ratio as their direct or indirect interests in such Person bear to the total of such interests.

(c) The Company shall not consummate any Flip-Over Event unless each Principal Party (or Person that may become a Principal Party as a result of such Flip-Over Event) shall have a sufficient number of authorized shares of its Common Stock that have not been issued or reserved for issuance to permit the exercise in full of the Rights in accordance with this Section 13 and unless prior thereto the Company and each such Principal Party shall have executed and delivered to the Rights Agent a supplemental agreement providing for the terms set forth in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this Section 13 and further providing that, as soon as practicable after the date of such Flip-Over Event, the Principal Party at its own expense will

(i) prepare and file a registration statement under the Securities Act with respect to the Rights and the securities purchasable upon exercise of the Rights on an appropriate form, and will use its best efforts to cause such registration statement to (A) become effective as soon as practicable after such filing and (B) remain effective (with a prospectus at all times meeting the requirements of the Securities Act) until the Expiration Date;

(ii) use its best efforts to qualify or register the Rights and the securities purchasable upon exercise of the Rights under the "blue sky" laws of such jurisdictions as may be necessary or appropriate;

(iii) use its best efforts, if the Common Stock of the Principal Party is or shall become listed on a national securities exchange, to list (or continue the listing of) the Rights and the securities purchasable upon exercise of the Rights on such securities exchange and, if the Common Stock of the Principal Party shall not be listed on a national securities exchange, to cause the Rights and the securities purchasable upon exercise of the Rights to be reported by Nasdaq or such other transaction reporting system then in use; and

(iv) deliver to holders of the Rights historical financial statements for the Principal Party and each of its Affiliates that comply in all respects with the requirements for registration on Form 10 under the Exchange Act.

The provisions of this Section 13 shall similarly apply to successive mergers or consolidations or sales or other transfers. In the event that a Flip-Over Event shall occur at any time after the occurrence of a Flip-In Event, the Rights that have not theretofore been exercised shall thereafter become exercisable in the manner described in Section 13(a).

(d) Notwithstanding anything in this Agreement to the contrary, Section 13 shall not be applicable to a transaction described in subparagraphs (x) and (y) of Section 13(a) if (i) such transaction is consummated with a Person or Persons who acquired shares of Common Stock pursuant to a Permitted Offer (or a wholly owned Subsidiary of any such Person or Persons), (ii) the price per share of Common Stock offered in such transaction is not less than the price per share of Common Stock paid to all holders of Common Stock whose shares were purchased pursuant to such Permitted Offer, and (iii) the form of consideration being offered to the remaining holders of shares of Common Stock pursuant to such transaction is the same as the form of consideration paid pursuant to such Permitted Offer. Upon consummation of any such transaction contemplated by this Section 13(d), all Rights hereunder shall expire.

Section 14. Fractional Rights and Fractional Shares.

(a) The Company shall not be required to issue fractions of Rights, except prior to the Distribution Date as provided in Section 11(p) hereof, or to distribute Rights Certificates or scrip evidencing fractional Rights. In lieu of such fractional Rights, there shall be paid to the registered holders of the Rights Certificates with regard to which such fractional Rights would otherwise be issuable, an amount in cash equal to the same fraction of the Closing Price of one Right for the Trading Day immediately prior to the date on which such fractional Rights would have been otherwise issuable.

(b) The Company shall not be required to issue fractions of shares of Preferred Stock (other than, except as provided in Section 7(c) hereof, fractions that are integral multiples of a Fractional Share of Preferred Stock) upon exercise of the Rights or to distribute certificates or scrip evidencing fractional shares of Preferred Stock (other than, except as provided in Section 7(c) hereof, fractions that are integral multiples of a Fractional Share of Preferred Stock). Interests in fractions of shares of Preferred Stock in integral multiples of a Fractional Share of Preferred Stock may, at the election of the Company in its sole discretion, be evidenced by depositary receipts, pursuant to an appropriate agreement between the Company and a depositary selected by it, provided that such agreement shall provide that the holders of

such depositary receipts shall have all the rights, privileges and preferences to which they are entitled as beneficial owners of the shares of Preferred Stock represented by such depositary receipts. In lieu of fractional shares of Preferred Stock that are not integral multiples of a Fractional Share of Preferred Stock, the Company may pay to the registered holders of Rights Certificates at the time such Rights are exercised as herein provided an amount in cash equal to the same fraction of one one-thousandth of the Closing Price of a share of Preferred Stock for the Trading Day immediately prior to the date of such exercise.

(c) Following the occurrence of a Triggering Event, the Company shall not be required to issue fractions of shares of Common Stock upon exercise of the Rights or to distribute certificates or scrip evidencing fractional shares of Common Stock. In lieu of fractional shares of Common Stock, the Company may pay to the registered holders of Rights Certificates at the time such Rights are exercised as herein provided an amount in cash equal to the same fraction of the Closing Price of one share of Common Stock for the Trading Day immediately prior to the date of such exercise.

(d) The holder of a Right by the acceptance of the Right expressly waives his right to receive any fractional Rights or any fractional shares upon exercise of a Right, except as permitted by this Section 14.

Section 15. Rights of Action. All rights of action in respect of this Agreement, other than rights of action vested in the Rights Agent pursuant to Section 18 hereof, are vested in the respective registered holders of the Rights Certificates (and, prior to the Distribution Date, the registered holders of the Common Stock) and, where applicable, the Company; and any registered holder of any Rights Certificate (or, prior to the Distribution Date, of the Common Stock), without the consent of the Rights Agent or of the holder of any other Rights Certificate (or, prior to the Distribution Date, of the Common Stock), may, in his own behalf and for his own benefit, enforce, and may institute and maintain any suit, action or proceeding against the Company to enforce, or otherwise act in respect of, his right to exercise the Rights evidenced by such Rights Certificate in the manner provided in such Rights Certificate and in this Agreement. Without limiting the foregoing or any remedies available to the holders of Rights, it is specifically acknowledged that the holders of Rights would not have an adequate remedy at law for any breach of this Agreement and shall be entitled to specific performance of the obligations hereunder and injunctive relief against actual or threatened violations of the obligations hereunder of any Person subject to this Agreement. After a Triggering Event, holders of Rights shall be entitled to recover the reasonable costs and expenses, including attorneys' fees, incurred by them in any action to enforce the provisions of this Agreement.

Section 16. Agreement of Rights Holders. Every holder of a Right by accepting the same consents and agrees with the Company and the Rights Agent and with every other holder of a Right that:

(a) prior to the Distribution Date, the Rights will not be evidenced by Rights Certificates and will be transferable only in connection with the transfer of Common Stock;

(b) after the Distribution Date, the Rights Certificates will be transferable only on the registry books of the Rights Agent if surrendered at the office or offices designated by the

Rights Agent for such purposes, duly endorsed or accompanied by a proper instrument of transfer and with the form of assignment set forth on the reverse side thereof and the certificate contained therein duly completed and fully executed;

(c) subject to Section 6(a) and Section 7(f) hereof, the Company and the Rights Agent may deem and treat the Person in whose name a Rights Certificate (or, prior to the Distribution Date, the associated Common Stock certificate) is registered as the absolute owner thereof and of the Rights evidenced thereby (notwithstanding any notations of ownership or writing on the Rights Certificates or the associated Common Stock certificate made by anyone other than the Company or the Rights Agent) for all purposes whatsoever, and neither the Company nor the Rights Agent, subject to the last sentence of Section 7(e) hereof, shall be affected by any notice to the contrary; and

(d) notwithstanding anything in this Agreement to the contrary, neither the Company nor the Rights Agent shall have any liability to any holder of a Right or other Person as a result of its inability to perform any of its obligations under this Agreement by reason of any preliminary or permanent injunction or other order, decree or ruling issued by a court of competent jurisdiction or by a governmental, regulatory or administrative agency or commission, or any statute, rule, regulation or executive order promulgated or enacted by any governmental authority, prohibiting or otherwise restraining performance of such obligation; provided, however, the Company must use its best efforts to have any such order, decree or ruling lifted or otherwise overturned as soon as possible.

Section 17. Rights Certificate Holder Not Deemed a Shareholder. No holder, as such, of any Rights Certificate shall be entitled to vote, receive dividends or be deemed for any purpose the holder of the number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock or any other securities of the Company that may at any time be issuable upon the exercise of the Rights represented thereby, nor shall anything contained herein or in any Rights Certificate be construed to confer upon the holder of any Rights Certificate, as such, any of the rights of a shareholder of the Company or any right to vote for the election of directors or upon any matter submitted to shareholders at any meeting thereof, or to give or withhold consent to any corporate action, or to receive notice of meetings or other actions affecting shareholders (except as provided in Section 25 hereof), or to receive dividends or subscription rights, or otherwise, until the Right or Rights evidenced by such Rights Certificate shall have been exercised in accordance with the provisions hereof.

Section 18. Concerning the Rights Agent.

(a) The Company agrees to pay to the Rights Agent reasonable compensation for all services rendered by it hereunder and, from time to time, on demand of the Rights Agent, its reasonable expenses and counsel fees and disbursements and other reasonable disbursements incurred in the administration and execution of this Agreement and the exercise and performance of its duties hereunder. The Company also agrees to indemnify the Rights Agent for, and to hold it harmless against, any loss, liability or expense, incurred without negligence, bad faith or willful misconduct on the part of the Rights Agent, for anything done or omitted by the Rights Agent in connection with the acceptance and administration of this Agreement, including the costs and expenses of defending against any claim of liability in the premises.

(b) The Rights Agent shall be protected and shall incur no liability for or in respect of any action taken, suffered or omitted by it in connection with its administration of this Agreement in reliance upon any Rights Certificate or certificate for Common Stock or for other securities of the Company, instrument of assignment or transfer, power of attorney, endorsement, affidavit, letter, notice, direction, consent, certificate, statement or other paper or document believed by it, after proper inquiry or examination, to be genuine and to be signed, executed and, where necessary, guaranteed, verified or acknowledged, by the proper Person or Persons.

Section 19. Merger or Consolidation or Change of Name of Rights Agent.

(a) Any corporation into which the Rights Agent or any successor Rights Agent may be merged or with which it may be consolidated, or any corporation resulting from any merger or consolidation to which the Rights Agent or any successor Rights Agent shall be a party, or any corporation succeeding to the corporate trust or stock transfer business of the Rights Agent or any successor Rights Agent, shall be the successor to the Rights Agent under this Agreement without the execution or filing of any paper or any further act on the part of any of the parties hereto; provided, however, that such corporation would be eligible for appointment as a successor Rights Agent under the provisions of Section 21 hereof. In case at the time such successor Rights Agent shall succeed to the agency created by this Agreement, any of the Rights Certificates shall have been countersigned but not delivered, any such successor Rights Agent may adopt the countersignature of a predecessor Rights Agent and deliver such Rights Certificates so countersigned; and in case at that time any of the Rights Certificates shall not have been countersigned, any successor Rights Agent may countersign such Rights Certificates either in the name of the predecessor or in the name of the successor Rights Agent; and in all such cases such Rights Certificates shall have the full force provided in the Rights Certificates and in this Agreement.

(b) In case at any time the name of the Rights Agent shall be changed and at such time any of the Rights Certificates shall have been countersigned but not delivered, the Rights Agent may adopt the countersignature under its prior name and deliver Rights Certificates so countersigned; and in case at that time any of the Rights Certificates shall not have been countersigned, the Rights Agent may countersign such Rights Certificates either in its prior name or in its changed name; and in all such cases such Rights Certificates shall have the full force provided in the Rights Certificates and in this Agreement.

Section 20. Duties of Rights Agent. The Rights Agent undertakes the duties and obligations imposed by this Agreement upon the following terms and conditions, by all of which the Company and the holders of Rights Certificates, by their acceptance thereof, shall be bound:

(a) The Rights Agent may consult with legal counsel (who may be legal counsel for the Company), and the opinion of such counsel shall be full and complete authorization and protection to the Rights Agent as to any action taken or omitted by it in good faith and in accordance with such opinion.

(b) Whenever in the performance of its duties under this Agreement the Rights Agent shall deem it necessary or desirable that any fact or matter (including, without

limitation, the identity of any Acquiring Person and the determination of "Current Market Price") be proved or established by the Company prior to taking or suffering any action hereunder, such fact or matter (unless other evidence in respect thereof be herein specifically prescribed) may be deemed to be conclusively proved and established by a certificate signed by the Chairman of the Board, the President, any Vice President, the Treasurer, any Assistant Treasurer, the Secretary or any Assistant Secretary of the Company and delivered to the Rights Agent; and such certificate shall be full authorization to the Rights Agent for any action taken or suffered in good faith by it under the provisions of this Agreement in reliance upon such certificate.

(c) The Rights Agent shall be liable hereunder only for its own negligence, bad faith or willful misconduct. In no event shall the Rights Agent be liable for special, indirect or consequential loss or damage of any kind whatsoever (including but not limited to lost profits), even if the Rights Agent has been advised of the likelihood of such loss or damage and regardless of the form of action.

(d) The Rights Agent shall not be liable for or by reason of any of the statements of fact or recitals contained in this Agreement or in the Rights Certificates or be required to verify the same (except as to its countersignature on such Rights Certificates), but all such statements and recitals are and shall be deemed to have been made by the Company only.

(e) The Rights Agent shall not be under any responsibility in respect of the validity of this Agreement or the execution and delivery hereof (except the due execution hereof by the Rights Agent) or in respect of the validity or execution of any Rights Certificate (except its countersignature thereof); nor shall it be responsible for any breach by the Company of any covenant or condition contained in this Agreement or in any Rights Certificate; nor shall it be responsible for any adjustment required under the provisions of Section 11 or Section 13 hereof or responsible for the manner, method or amount of any such adjustment or the ascertaining of the existence of facts that would require any such adjustment (except with respect to the exercise of Rights evidenced by Rights Certificates after receipt of actual knowledge of any such adjustment); nor shall it by any act hereunder be deemed to make any representation or warranty as to the authorization or reservation of any shares of Preferred Stock or Common Stock or other securities to be issued pursuant to this Agreement or any Rights Certificate or as to whether any shares of Preferred Stock or Common Stock or other securities will, when so issued, be validly authorized and issued, fully paid and nonassessable.

(f) The Company agrees that it will perform, execute, acknowledge and deliver or cause to be performed, executed, acknowledged and delivered all such further and other acts, instruments and assurances as may reasonably be required by the Rights Agent for the carrying out or performing by the Rights Agent of the provisions of this Agreement.

(g) The Rights Agent is hereby authorized and directed to accept instructions with respect to the performance of its duties hereunder from the Chairman of the Board, the President, any Vice President, the Secretary, any Assistant Secretary, the Treasurer or any Assistant Treasurer of the Company, and to apply to such officers for advice or instructions in connection with its duties, and it shall not be liable for any action taken or suffered to be taken by it in good faith in accordance with instructions of any such officer.

(h) The Rights Agent and any shareholder, director, officer or employee of the Rights Agent may buy, sell or deal in any of the Rights or other securities of the Company or become pecuniarily interested in any transaction in which the Company may be interested, or contract with or lend money to the Company or otherwise act as fully and freely as though it were not Rights Agent under this Agreement. Nothing herein shall preclude the Rights Agent from acting in any other capacity for the Company or for any other legal entity.

(i) The Rights Agent may execute and exercise any of the rights or powers hereby vested in it or perform any duty hereunder either itself or by or through its attorneys or agents (including the Company), and the Rights Agent shall not be answerable or accountable for any act, omission, default, neglect or misconduct of any such attorneys or agents or for any loss to the Company resulting from any such act, omission, default, neglect or misconduct; provided, however, that reasonable care was exercised in the selection and continued employment thereof.

(j) No provision of this Agreement shall require the Rights Agent to expend or risk its own funds or otherwise incur any financial liability in the performance of any of its duties hereunder or in the exercise of its rights if there shall be reasonable grounds for believing that repayment of such funds or adequate indemnification against such risk or liability is not reasonably assured to it.

(k) If, with respect to any Rights Certificate surrendered to the Rights Agent for exercise or transfer, the certificate attached to the form of assignment or form of election to purchase, as the case may be, has either not been completed or indicates an affirmative response to clause 1 and/or 2 thereof, the Rights Agent shall not take any further action with respect to such requested exercise or transfer without first consulting with the Company.

Section 21. Change of Rights Agent. The Rights Agent or any successor Rights Agent may resign and be discharged from its duties under this Agreement upon 30 days' notice in writing mailed to the Company, and to each transfer agent of the Common Stock and the Preferred Stock, by registered or certified mail, and to the registered holders, if any, of the Rights Certificates by first-class mail. The Company may remove the Rights Agent or any successor Rights Agent (with or without cause) upon 30 days' notice in writing, mailed to the Rights Agent or successor Rights Agent, as the case may be, and to each transfer agent of the Common Stock and the Preferred Stock, by registered or certified mail, and to the registered holders of the Rights Certificates, if any, by first-class mail. If the Rights Agent shall resign or be removed or shall otherwise become incapable of acting, the Company shall appoint a successor to the Rights Agent. Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this Section 21, in no event shall the resignation or removal of a Rights Agent be effective until a successor Rights Agent shall have been appointed and have accepted such appointment. If the Company shall fail to make such appointment within a period of 30 days after giving notice of such removal or after it has been notified in writing of such resignation or incapacity by the resigning or incapacitated Rights Agent or by the registered holder of a Rights Certificate (who shall, with such notice, submit his Rights Certificate for inspection by the Company), then the Rights Agent or the registered holder of any Rights Certificate may apply to any court of competent jurisdiction for the appointment of a new Rights Agent. Any successor Rights Agent, whether appointed by the Company or by such a court, shall be (a) a corporation or trust company organized and doing business under the laws of the United States or of the State of New York or Texas (or of any

other state of the United States so long as such corporation or trust company is authorized to conduct a stock transfer or corporate trust business in the State of New York or Texas), in good standing, which is authorized under such laws to exercise corporate trust or stock transfer powers and is subject to supervision or examination by federal or state authority and which has at the time of its appointment as Rights Agent a combined capital and surplus of at least \$50,000,000 or (b) an affiliate of a corporation or trust company described in clause (a) of this sentence. After appointment, the successor Rights Agent shall be vested with the same powers, rights, duties and responsibilities as if it had been originally named as Rights Agent without further act or deed; but the predecessor Rights Agent shall deliver and transfer to the successor Rights Agent any property at the time held by it hereunder, and execute and deliver any further assurance, conveyance, act or deed necessary for the purpose. Not later than the effective date of any such appointment, the Company shall file notice thereof in writing with the predecessor Rights Agent and each transfer agent of the Common Stock and the Preferred Stock, and mail a notice thereof in writing to the registered holders, if any, of the Rights Certificates. Failure to give any notice provided for in this Section 21, however, or any defect therein, shall not affect the legality or validity of the resignation or removal of the Rights Agent or the appointment of the successor Rights Agent, as the case may be.

Section 22. Issuance of New Rights Certificates.

Notwithstanding any of the provisions of this Agreement or of the Rights to the contrary, the Company may, at its option, issue new Rights Certificates evidencing Rights in such form as may be approved by its Board of Directors to reflect any adjustment or change in the Purchase Price and the number or kind or class of shares or other securities or property purchasable under the Rights Certificates made in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement. In addition, in connection with the issuance or sale of shares of Common Stock following the Distribution Date and prior to the Expiration Date, the Company (a) shall, with respect to shares of Common Stock so issued or sold pursuant to the exercise of stock options or under any employee plan or arrangement granted or awarded on or prior to the Distribution Date, or upon the exercise, conversion or exchange of securities issued by the Company on or prior to the Distribution Date, and (b) may, in any other case, if deemed necessary or appropriate by the Board of Directors of the Company, issue Rights Certificates representing the appropriate number of Rights in connection with such issuance or sale; provided, however, that (i) no such Rights Certificate shall be issued if, and to the extent that, the Company shall be advised by counsel that such issuance would create a significant risk of material adverse tax consequences to the Company or the Person to whom such Rights Certificate would be issued, and (ii) no such Rights Certificate shall be issued if, and to the extent that, appropriate adjustment shall otherwise have been made in lieu of the issuance thereof.

Section 23. Redemption and Termination.

(a) The Board of Directors of the Company may, at its option, at any time prior to the time a Person becomes an Acquiring Person, cause the Company to redeem all but not less than all the then outstanding Rights at a redemption price of \$.005 per Right, as such amount may be appropriately adjusted, if necessary, to reflect any stock split, stock dividend or similar transaction occurring after the Effective Time (such redemption price being hereinafter referred to as the "Redemption Price"). The Company may, at its option, pay the Redemption Price in cash, shares of Common Stock (based on the Current Market Price of the Common

Stock at the time of redemption) or any other form of consideration deemed appropriate by the Board of Directors.

(b) Immediately upon the effectiveness of the action of the Board of Directors of the Company ordering the redemption of the Rights (the effectiveness of which action may be conditioned on the occurrence of one or more events or on the existence of one or more facts or may be effective at some future time), evidence of which shall be filed with the Rights Agent and without any further action and without any notice, the right to exercise the Rights will terminate and the only right thereafter of the holders of Rights shall be to receive the Redemption Price for each Right so held. Promptly after the effectiveness of the action of the Board of Directors ordering the redemption of the Rights, the Company shall give notice of such redemption to the Rights Agent and the registered holders of the then outstanding Rights by mailing such notice to all such holders at each holder's last address as it appears upon the registry books of the Rights Agent or, prior to the Distribution Date, on the registry books of the Company for the Common Stock. Any notice that is mailed in the manner herein provided shall be deemed given, whether or not the holder receives the notice. Each such notice of redemption shall state the method by which the payment of the Redemption Price will be made.

Section 24. Exchange.

(a) The Board of Directors of the Company may, at its option, exchange all or part of the then outstanding and exercisable Rights (which shall not include Rights that have become void pursuant to the provisions of Section 7(e) hereof) for shares of Common Stock or Common Stock Equivalents or any combination thereof, at an exchange ratio of one share of Common Stock, or such number of Common Stock Equivalents or units representing fractions thereof as would be deemed to have the same value as one share of Common Stock, per Right, appropriately adjusted, if necessary, to reflect any stock split, stock dividend or similar transaction occurring after the Effective Time (such exchange ratio being hereinafter referred to as the "Exchange Ratio"). Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Board of Directors may not effect such exchange at any time after (i) any Person (other than an Exempt Person), together with all Affiliates and Associates of such Person, becomes the Beneficial Owner of 50% or more of the shares of Common Stock then outstanding or (ii) the occurrence of a Flip-Over Event.

(b) Immediately upon the effectiveness of the action of the Board of Directors of the Company ordering the exchange of any Rights pursuant to and in accordance with subsection (a) of this Section 24 (the effectiveness of which action may be conditioned on the occurrence of one or more events or on the existence of one or more facts or may be effective at some future time) and without any further action and without any notice, the right to exercise such Rights shall terminate and the only right thereafter of a holder of such Rights shall be to receive that number of shares of Common Stock and/or Common Stock Equivalents equal to the number of such Rights held by such holder multiplied by the Exchange Ratio. The Company shall promptly give public notice of any such exchange; provided, however, that the failure to give, or any defect in, such notice shall not affect the validity of such exchange. The Company promptly shall mail a notice of any such exchange to all of the registered holders of such Rights at their last addresses as they appear upon the registry books of the Rights Agent. Any notice which is mailed in the manner herein provided shall be deemed given, whether or not the holder

receives the notice. Each such notice of exchange will state the method by which the exchange of the shares of Common Stock and/or Common Stock Equivalents for Rights will be effected and, in the event of any partial exchange, the number of Rights that will be exchanged. Any partial exchange shall be effected as nearly pro rata as possible based on the number of Rights (other than Rights that have become void pursuant to the provisions of Section 7(e) hereof) held by each holder of Rights.

(c) In the event that the number of shares of Common Stock that are authorized by the Company's articles of incorporation but not outstanding or reserved for issuance for purposes other than upon exercise of the Rights is not sufficient to permit an exchange of Rights as contemplated in accordance with this Section 24, the Company may, at its option, take all such action as may be necessary to authorize additional shares of Common Stock for issuance upon exchange of the Rights.

(d) The Company shall not be required to issue fractions of shares of Common Stock or to distribute certificates or scrip evidencing fractional shares of Common Stock. In lieu of such fractional shares of Common Stock, the Company shall pay to the registered holders of Rights with regard to which such fractional shares of Common Stock would otherwise be issuable an amount in cash equal to the same fraction of the value of a whole share of Common Stock. For purposes of this Section 24, the value of a whole share of Common Stock shall be the Closing Price per share of Common Stock for the Trading Day immediately prior to the date of exchange pursuant to this Section 24, and the value of any Common Stock Equivalent shall be deemed to have the same value as the Common Stock on such date.

Section 25. Notice of Certain Events.

(a) In case the Company shall propose, at any time after the Distribution Date, (i) to pay any dividend payable in stock of any class to the holders of Preferred Stock or to make any other distribution to the holders of Preferred Stock (other than a regular quarterly cash dividend out of earnings or retained earnings of the Company), or (ii) to offer to the holders of Preferred Stock rights or warrants to subscribe for or to purchase any additional shares of Preferred Stock or shares of stock of any class or any other securities, rights or options, or (iii) to effect any reclassification of its Preferred Stock (other than a reclassification involving only the subdivision of outstanding shares of Preferred Stock), or (iv) to effect any consolidation or merger into or with any other Person (other than a wholly owned Subsidiary of the Company in a transaction that complies with Section 11(o) hereof), or to effect any sale, lease or other transfer of all or substantially all the Company's assets, cash flow or earning power to any other Person or Persons (other than a wholly owned Subsidiary of the Company in a transaction that complies with Section 11(o) hereof), or (v) to effect the liquidation, dissolution or winding up of the Company, or (vi) to be acquired pursuant to a share exchange, then, in each such case, the Company shall give to each holder of record of a Rights Certificate, to the extent feasible and in accordance with Section 26 hereof, a notice of such proposed action, which shall specify the record date for the purposes of such stock dividend, distribution of rights or warrants, or the date on which such reclassification, consolidation, merger, sale, lease, transfer, liquidation, dissolution or winding up is to take place and the date of participation therein by the holders of the shares of Preferred Stock, if any such date is to be fixed, and such notice shall be so given in the case of any action covered by clause (i) or (ii) above at least 20 days prior to the record date

for determining holders of the shares of Preferred Stock for purposes of such action, and in the case of any such other action, at least 20 days prior to the date of the taking of such proposed action or the date of participation therein by the holders of the shares of Preferred Stock, whichever shall be the earlier. The failure to give notice required by this Section 25 or any defect therein shall not affect the legality or validity of the action taken by the Company or the vote upon any such action.

(b) In case any Flip-In Event or Flip-Over Event shall occur, then the Company shall as soon as practicable thereafter give to each registered holder of a Rights Certificate (or if occurring prior to the Distribution Date, the registered holders of Common Stock), in accordance with Section 26 hereof, a notice of the occurrence of such event, which shall specify the event and the consequences of the event to holders of Rights under Section 11(a)(ii) or Section 13(a) hereof, and all references in the preceding paragraph to Preferred Stock shall be deemed thereafter to refer to Common Stock and/or, if appropriate, other securities.

Section 26. Notices. Notices or demands authorized by this Agreement to be given or made by the Rights Agent or by the holder of any Rights Certificate to or on the Company shall be sufficiently given or made if sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, postage prepaid, addressed (until another address is filed in writing with the Rights Agent) as follows:

CenterPoint Energy, Inc.
1111 Louisiana
Houston, Texas 77002
Attention: General Counsel

Subject to the provisions of Section 21, any notice or demand authorized by this Agreement to be given or made by the Company or by the holder of any Rights Certificate to or on the Rights Agent shall be sufficiently given or made if sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, postage prepaid, addressed (until another address is filed in writing with the Company) as follows:

JPMorgan Chase Bank
600 Travis Street, Suite 1150
Houston, Texas 77002
Attention:

Notices or demands authorized by this Agreement to be given or made by the Company or the Rights Agent to the holder of any Rights Certificate (or, if prior to the Distribution Date, to the holder of certificates representing shares of Common Stock) shall be sufficiently given or made if sent by first-class mail, postage prepaid, addressed to such holder at the address of such holder as shown on the registry books of the Company.

Section 27. Supplements and Amendments. Prior to the time a Person becomes an Acquiring Person and subject to the penultimate sentence of this Section 27, the Company may in its sole and absolute discretion and the Rights Agent shall, if the Company so directs,

supplement or amend any provision of this Agreement in any respect without the approval of any holders of Rights or holders of Common Stock. From and after the time a Person becomes an Acquiring Person and subject to the penultimate sentence of this Section 27, the Company may and the Rights Agent shall, if the Company so directs, supplement or amend this Agreement without the approval of any holders of Rights in order (i) to cure any ambiguity, (ii) to correct or supplement any provision contained herein that may be defective or inconsistent with any other provisions herein, (iii) to shorten or lengthen any time period hereunder or (iv) to change or supplement the provisions hereunder in any manner that the Company may deem necessary or desirable; provided that no such amendment or supplement shall materially and adversely affect the interests of the holders of Rights (other than an Acquiring Person or an Affiliate or Associate of an Acquiring Person) and further provided that this Agreement may not be supplemented or amended pursuant to this sentence to lengthen (A) a time period relating to when the Rights may be redeemed or (B) any other time period unless the lengthening of such other time period is for the purpose of protecting, enhancing or clarifying the rights of, and/or benefits to, the holders of Rights (other than any Acquiring Person and its Affiliates and Associates). Upon the delivery of a certificate from an appropriate officer of the Company which states that the proposed supplement or amendment is in compliance with the terms of this Section 27, the Rights Agent shall execute such supplement or amendment; provided, however, that the Rights Agent may, but shall not be obligated to, enter into any such supplement or amendment that affects the Rights Agent's own rights, duties or immunities under this Agreement. Notwithstanding anything contained in this Agreement to the contrary, no supplement or amendment shall be made that decreases the Redemption Price.

Section 28. Successors. All the covenants and provisions of this Agreement by or for the benefit of the Company or the Rights Agent shall bind and inure to the benefit of their respective successors and assigns hereunder.

Section 29. Determinations and Actions by the Board of Directors, etc. For all purposes of this Agreement, any calculation of the number of shares of Common Stock outstanding at any particular time, including for purposes of determining the particular percentage of such outstanding shares of Common Stock of which any Person is the Beneficial Owner, shall be made in accordance with the last sentence of Rule 13d-3(d)(1)(i) of the General Rules and Regulations under the Exchange Act as in effect on the date of this Agreement. The Board of Directors of the Company (or, as set forth herein, certain specified members thereof) shall have the exclusive power and authority to administer this Agreement and to exercise all rights and powers specifically granted to the Board of Directors of the Company or to the Company, or as may be necessary or advisable in the administration of this Agreement, including, without limitation, the right and power to (i) interpret the provisions of this Agreement and (ii) make all determinations deemed necessary or advisable for the administration of this Agreement (including, without limitation, a determination to redeem or not redeem the Rights or to amend this Agreement). All such actions, calculations, interpretations and determinations (including, for purposes of clause (y) below, all omissions with respect to the foregoing) that are done or made by the Board of Directors of the Company in good faith, shall (x) be final, conclusive and binding on the Company, the Rights Agent, the holders of the Rights, as such, and all other parties, and (y) not subject the Board of Directors to any liability to the holders of the Rights.

Section 30. Benefits of this Agreement. Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to give to any Person other than the Company, the Rights Agent and the registered holders of the Rights Certificates (and, prior to the Distribution Date, registered holders of the Common Stock) any legal or equitable right, remedy or claim under this Agreement; but this Agreement shall be for the sole and exclusive benefit of the Company, the Rights Agent and the registered holders of the Rights Certificates (and, prior to the Distribution Date, registered holders of the Common Stock).

Section 31. Severability. If any term, provision, covenant or restriction of this Agreement is held by a court of competent jurisdiction or other authority to be invalid, void or unenforceable, the remainder of the terms, provisions, covenants and restrictions of this Agreement shall remain in full force and effect and shall in no way be affected, impaired or invalidated; provided, however, that notwithstanding anything in this Agreement to the contrary, if any such term, provision, covenant or restriction is held by such court or authority to be invalid, void or unenforceable and the Board of Directors of the Company determines in its good faith judgment that severing the invalid language from this Agreement would adversely affect the purpose or effect of this Agreement, the right of redemption set forth in Section 23 hereof shall be reinstated and shall not expire until the close of business on the tenth day following the date of such determination by the Board of Directors of the Company. Without limiting the foregoing, if any provision requiring that a determination be made by less than the entire Board of Directors of the Company is held by a court of competent jurisdiction or other authority to be invalid, void or unenforceable, such determination shall then be made by the entire Board of Directors of the Company.

Section 32. Governing Law. This Agreement, each Right and each Rights Certificate issued hereunder shall be deemed to be a contract made under the laws of the State of Texas and for all purposes shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of such State applicable to contracts made and to be performed entirely within such State.

Section 33. Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in any number of counterparts and each of such counterparts shall for all purposes be deemed to be an original, and all such counterparts shall together constitute but one and the same instrument.

Section 34. Descriptive Headings. Descriptive headings of the several Sections of this Agreement are inserted for convenience only and shall not control or affect the meaning or construction of any of the provisions hereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have caused this Agreement to be duly executed as of the day and year first above written.

CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.

By /s/ Rufus S. Scott

Name: Rufus S. Scott

Title: Vice President and
Deputy General Counsel

JPMORGAN CHASE BANK

By /s/ Greg Campbell

Name: Greg Campbell

Title: Vice President & Trust Officer

FORM OF
STATEMENT OF RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING SERIES OF SHARES
DESIGNATED

SERIES A PREFERRED STOCK

OF

CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.

Pursuant to Article 2.13D of
the Texas Business Corporation Act

Pursuant to the provisions of Article 2.13D of the Texas Business Corporation Act, the undersigned submits the following statement for the purpose of establishing and designating a series of shares of its Preferred Stock, without par value, designated "Series A Preferred Stock" and fixing and determining the relative rights and preferences thereof:

1. The name of the company is CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC. (the "Company").

2. The following resolution establishing and designating a series of shares and fixing and determining the relative rights and preferences thereof, was duly adopted by all necessary action on the part of the Company on _____, 2001:

RESOLVED, that pursuant to the authority vested in the Board of Directors of this Company in accordance with the provisions of the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation of the Company, a series of Preferred Stock, without par value, of the Company be and hereby is created, and that the designation and number of shares thereof and the preferences, limitations and relative rights, including voting rights, of the shares of such series and the qualifications, limitations and restrictions thereof are as follows:

Series A Preferred Stock

1. Designation and Amount. There shall be a series of Preferred Stock that shall be designated as "Series A Preferred Stock," and the number of shares constituting such series shall be 1,000,000. Such number of shares may be increased or decreased by resolution of the Board of Directors; provided, however, that no decrease shall reduce the number of shares of Series A Preferred Stock to less than the number of shares then issued and outstanding plus the number of shares issuable upon exercise of outstanding rights, options or warrants or upon conversion of outstanding securities issued by the Company.

2. Dividends and Distributions.

(A) Subject to the prior and superior rights of the holders of any shares of any series of Preferred Stock ranking prior and superior to the shares of Series A Preferred Stock with respect to dividends, the holders of shares of Series A Preferred Stock, in preference to the holders of shares of any class or series of stock of the Company ranking junior to the Series A Preferred Stock, shall be entitled to receive, when, as and if declared by the Board of Directors out of assets of the Company legally available for the purpose, quarterly dividends payable in cash on the first day of January, April, July and October in each year (each such date being referred to herein as a "Quarterly Dividend Payment Date"), commencing on the first Quarterly Dividend Payment Date after the first issuance of a share or fraction of a share of Series A Preferred Stock, in an amount per share (rounded to the nearest cent) equal to the greater of (a) \$10.00 or (b) the Adjustment Number (as defined below) times the aggregate per share amount of all cash dividends, and the Adjustment Number times the aggregate per share amount (payable in kind) of all non-cash dividends or other distributions other than a dividend payable in shares of Common Stock, without par value, of the Company (the "Common Stock") or a subdivision of the outstanding shares of Common Stock (by reclassification or otherwise), declared on the Common Stock, since the immediately preceding Quarterly Dividend Payment Date, or, with respect to the first Quarterly Dividend Payment Date, since the first issuance of any share or fraction of a share of Series A Preferred Stock. The "Adjustment Number" shall initially be 1,000. In the event the Company shall at any time after the time of the issuance by the Secretary of State of the State of Texas of the certificate of merger with respect to the merger of Reliant Energy MergerCo, Inc., a Texas corporation ("MergerCo"), with and into Reliant Energy, Incorporated, a Texas corporation ("REI"), pursuant to the Agreement and Plan of Merger dated as of October 19, 2001, by and among REI, MergerCo and the Company (the "Merger"), or, if a later effective time was provided in the articles of merger with respect to the Merger, such later time (the "Rights Declaration Date") (i) declare any dividend on Common Stock payable in shares of Common Stock, (ii) subdivide the outstanding Common Stock or (iii) combine the outstanding Common Stock into a smaller number of shares, then in each such case the Adjustment Number in effect immediately prior to such event shall be adjusted by multiplying such Adjustment Number by a fraction the numerator of which is the number of shares of Common Stock outstanding immediately after such event and the denominator of which is the number of shares of Common Stock that were outstanding immediately prior to such event.

(B) The Company shall declare a dividend or distribution on the Series A Preferred Stock as provided in paragraph (A) above immediately after it declares a dividend or distribution on the Common Stock (other than a dividend payable in shares of Common Stock); provided that, in the event no dividend or distribution shall have been declared on the Common Stock during the period between any Quarterly Dividend Payment Date and the next subsequent Quarterly Dividend Payment Date, a dividend of \$10.00 per share on the Series A Preferred Stock shall nevertheless be payable on such subsequent Quarterly Dividend Payment Date.

(C) Dividends shall begin to accrue and be cumulative on outstanding shares of Series A Preferred Stock from the Quarterly Dividend Payment Date next preceding the date of issue of such shares of Series A Preferred Stock, unless the date of issue of such shares is prior to the record date for the first Quarterly Dividend Payment Date, in which case dividends on such shares shall begin to accrue from the date of issue of such shares, or unless the date of issue is a

Quarterly Dividend Payment Date or is a date after the record date for the determination of holders of shares of Series A Preferred Stock entitled to receive a quarterly dividend and before such Quarterly Dividend Payment Date, in either of which events such dividends shall begin to accrue and be cumulative from such Quarterly Dividend Payment Date. Accrued but unpaid dividends shall not bear interest. Dividends paid on the shares of Series A Preferred Stock in an amount less than the total amount of such dividends at the time accrued and payable on such shares shall be allocated pro rata on a share-by-share basis among all such shares at the time outstanding. The Board of Directors may fix a record date for the determination of holders of shares of Series A Preferred Stock entitled to receive payment of a dividend or distribution declared thereon.

3. Voting Rights. The holders of shares of Series A Preferred Stock shall have the following voting rights:

(A) Each share of Series A Preferred Stock shall entitle the holder thereof to a number of votes equal to the Adjustment Number on all matters submitted to a vote of the shareholders of the Company.

(B) Except as otherwise provided by law or the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation of the Company, the holders of shares of Series A Preferred Stock, the holders of shares of any other class or series entitled to vote with the Common Stock and the holders of shares of Common Stock shall vote together as one class on all matters submitted to a vote of shareholders of the Company.

(C) (i) If at any time dividends on any Series A Preferred Stock shall be in arrears in an amount equal to six quarterly dividends thereon, the occurrence of such contingency shall mark the beginning of a period (herein called a "default period") that shall extend until such time when all accrued and unpaid dividends for all previous quarterly dividend periods and for the current quarterly dividend period on all shares of Series A Preferred Stock then outstanding shall have been declared and paid or set apart for payment. During each default period, (1) the number of directors of the Company shall be increased by two, effective as of the time of election of such directors as herein provided, and (2) the holders of Preferred Stock (including holders of the Series A Preferred Stock) upon which these or like voting rights have been conferred and are exercisable (the "Voting Preferred Stock") with dividends in arrears in an amount equal to six quarterly dividends thereon, voting as a class, irrespective of series, shall have the right to elect such two directors.

(ii) During any default period, such voting right of the holders of Series A Preferred Stock may be exercised initially at a special meeting called pursuant to subparagraph (iii) of this Section 3(C) or at any annual meeting of shareholders, and thereafter at annual meetings of shareholders, provided that such voting right shall not be exercised unless the holders of at least one-third in number of the shares of Voting Preferred Stock outstanding shall be present in person or by proxy. The absence of a quorum of the holders of Common Stock shall not affect the exercise by the holders of Voting Preferred Stock of such voting right.

(iii) Unless the holders of Voting Preferred Stock shall, during an existing default period, have previously exercised their right to elect directors, the Board of Directors

may order, or any shareholder or shareholders owning in the aggregate not less than ten percent of the total number of shares of Voting Preferred Stock outstanding, irrespective of series, may request, the calling of a special meeting of the holders of Voting Preferred Stock, which meeting shall thereupon be called by the Chairman, the President, a Vice President or the Corporate Secretary of the Company. Notice of such meeting and of any annual meeting at which holders of Voting Preferred Stock are entitled to vote pursuant to this paragraph (C)(iii) shall be given to each holder of record of Voting Preferred Stock by mailing a copy of such notice to him at his last address as the same appears on the books of the Company. Such meeting shall be called for a time not earlier than 20 days and not later than 60 days after such order or request or, in default of the calling of such meeting within 60 days after such order or request, such meeting may be called on similar notice by any shareholder or shareholders owning in the aggregate not less than ten percent (10%) of the total number of shares of Voting Preferred Stock outstanding. Notwithstanding the provisions of this paragraph (C)(iii), no such special meeting shall be called during the period within 60 days immediately preceding the date fixed for the next annual meeting of the shareholders.

(iv) In any default period, after the holders of Voting Preferred Stock shall have exercised their right to elect directors voting as a class, (x) the directors so elected by the holders of Voting Preferred Stock shall continue in office until their successors shall have been elected by such holders or until the expiration of the default period, and (y) any vacancy in the Board of Directors may be filled by vote of a majority of the remaining directors theretofore elected by the holders of the class or classes of stock which elected the director whose office shall have become vacant. References in this paragraph (C) to directors elected by the holders of a particular class or classes of stock shall include directors elected by such directors to fill vacancies as provided in clause (y) of the foregoing sentence.

(v) Immediately upon the expiration of a default period, (x) the right of the holders of Voting Preferred Stock as a class to elect directors shall cease, (y) the term of any directors elected by the holders of Voting Preferred Stock as a class shall terminate and (z) the number of directors shall be such number as may be provided for in the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation of the Company or the Amended and Restated Bylaws irrespective of any increase made pursuant to the provisions of paragraph (C) of this Section 3 (such number being subject, however, to change thereafter in any manner provided by law or in the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation of the Company or the Amended and Restated Bylaws). Any vacancies in the Board of Directors effected by the provisions of clauses (y) and (z) in the preceding sentence may be filled by a majority of the remaining directors.

(D) Except as set forth herein, holders of Series A Preferred Stock shall have no special voting rights and their consent shall not be required (except to the extent they are entitled to vote with holders of Common Stock as set forth herein) for taking any corporate action.

4. Certain Restrictions.

(A) Whenever quarterly dividends or other dividends or distributions payable on the Series A Preferred Stock as provided in Section 2 are in arrears, thereafter and until all accrued and unpaid dividends and distributions, whether or not declared, on shares of Series A Preferred Stock outstanding shall have been paid in full, the Company shall not:

(i) declare or pay dividends on, make any other distributions on, or redeem or purchase or otherwise acquire for consideration any shares of stock ranking junior (either as to dividends or upon liquidation, dissolution or winding up) to the Series A Preferred Stock;

(ii) declare or pay dividends on or make any other distributions on any shares of stock ranking on a parity (either as to dividends or upon liquidation, dissolution or winding up) with the Series A Preferred Stock, except dividends paid ratably on the Series A Preferred Stock and all such parity stock on which dividends are payable or in arrears in proportion to the total amounts to which the holders of all such shares are then entitled; or

(iii) redeem or purchase or otherwise acquire for consideration any shares of Series A Preferred Stock, or any shares of stock ranking on a parity with the Series A Preferred Stock, except in accordance with a purchase offer made in writing or by publication (as determined by the Board of Directors) to all holders of Series A Preferred Stock, or to all such holders and the holders of any such shares ranking on a parity therewith, upon such terms as the Board of Directors, after consideration of the respective annual dividend rates and other relative powers, preferences and rights of the respective series and classes, shall determine in good faith will result in fair and equitable treatment among the respective series or classes.

(B) The Company shall not permit any subsidiary of the Company to purchase or otherwise acquire for consideration any shares of capital stock of the Company unless the Company could, under paragraph (A) of this Section 4, purchase or otherwise acquire such shares at such time and in such manner.

5. **Reacquired Shares.** Any shares of Series A Preferred Stock purchased or otherwise acquired by the Company in any manner whatsoever shall be retired and canceled promptly after the acquisition thereof. All such shares shall upon their cancellation become authorized but unissued shares of Preferred Stock and may be reissued as part of a new series of Preferred Stock to be created by resolution or resolutions of the Board of Directors, subject to any conditions and restrictions on issuance set forth in the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation of the Company.

6. **Liquidation, Dissolution or Winding Up.** (A) Upon any liquidation (voluntary or otherwise), dissolution or winding up of the Company, no distribution shall be made to the holders of shares of stock ranking junior (either as to dividends or upon liquidation, dissolution or winding up) to the Series A Preferred Stock unless, prior thereto, the holders of shares of Series A Preferred Stock shall have received \$1,000 per share, plus an amount equal to accrued and unpaid dividends and distributions thereon, whether or not declared, to the date of such payment (the "Series A Liquidation Preference"). Following the payment of the full amount of the Series A Liquidation Preference, no additional distributions shall be made to the holders of shares of Series A Preferred Stock unless, prior thereto, the holders of shares of Common Stock shall have received an amount per share (the "Common Adjustment") equal to the quotient obtained by dividing (i) the Series A Liquidation Preference by (ii) the Adjustment Number. Following the payment of the full amount of the Series A Liquidation Preference and the Common Adjustment in respect of all outstanding shares of Series A Preferred Stock and

Common Stock, respectively, holders of Series A Preferred Stock and holders of shares of Common Stock shall, subject to the prior rights of all other series of Preferred Stock, if any, ranking prior thereto, receive their ratable and proportionate share of the remaining assets to be distributed in the ratio of the Adjustment Number to 1 with respect to such Series A Preferred Stock and Common Stock, on a per share basis, respectively.

(B) In the event, however, that there are not sufficient assets available to permit payment in full of the Series A Liquidation Preference and the liquidation preferences of all other series of Preferred Stock, if any, that rank on a parity with the Series A Preferred Stock, then such remaining assets shall be distributed ratably to the holders of such parity shares in proportion to their respective liquidation preferences. In the event, however, that there are not sufficient assets available to permit payment in full of the Common Adjustment, then such remaining assets shall be distributed ratably to the holders of Common Stock.

(C) Neither the merger or consolidation of the Company into or with another Company nor the merger or consolidation of any other Company into or with the Company shall be deemed to be a liquidation, dissolution or winding up of the Company within the meaning of this Section 6, but the sale, lease or conveyance of all or substantially all of the Company's assets shall be deemed to be a liquidation, dissolution or winding up of the Company within the meaning of this Section 6.

7. Consolidation, Merger, etc. In case the Company shall enter into any consolidation, merger, combination, share exchange or other transaction in which the shares of Common Stock are exchanged for or changed into other stock or securities, cash and/or any other property, then in any such case each share of Series A Preferred Stock shall at the same time be similarly exchanged or changed in an amount per share equal to the Adjustment Number times the aggregate amount of stock, securities, cash and/or any other property (payable in kind), as the case may be, into which or for which each share of Common Stock is changed or exchanged.

8. Redemption. (A) The Company, at its option, may redeem shares of the Series A Preferred Stock in whole at any time and in part from time to time, at a redemption price equal to the Adjustment Number times the current per share market price (as such term is hereinafter defined) of the Common Stock on the date of the mailing of the notice of redemption, together with unpaid accumulated dividends to the date of such redemption. The "current per share market price" on any date shall be deemed to be the average of the closing price per share of such Common Stock for the ten consecutive Trading Days (as such term is hereinafter defined) immediately prior to such date; provided, however, that in the event that the current per share market price of the Common Stock is determined during a period following the announcement of (A) a dividend or distribution on the Common Stock other than a regular quarterly cash dividend or (B) any subdivision, combination or reclassification of such Common Stock and the ex-dividend date for such dividend or distribution, or the record date for such subdivision, combination or reclassification, shall not have occurred prior to the commencement of such ten Trading Day period, then, and in each such case, the current per share market price shall be properly adjusted to take into account ex-dividend trading. The closing price for each day shall be the last sales price, regular way, or, in case no such sale takes place on such day, the average of the closing bid and asked prices, regular way, in either case as reported in the principal transaction reporting system with respect to securities listed or admitted to trading on the New

York Stock Exchange, or, if the Common Stock is not listed or admitted to trading on the New York Stock Exchange, on the principal national securities exchange on which the Common Stock is listed or admitted to trading, or, if the Common Stock is not listed or admitted to trading on any national securities exchange but sales price information is reported for such security, as reported by the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc. Automated Quotations System ("Nasdaq") or such other self-regulatory organization or registered securities information processor (as such terms are used under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended) that then reports information concerning the Common Stock, or, if sales price information is not so reported, the average of the high bid and low asked prices in the over-the-counter market on such day, as reported by Nasdaq or such other entity, or, if on any such date the Common Stock is not quoted by any such entity, the average of the closing bid and asked prices as furnished by a professional market maker making a market in the Common Stock selected by the Board of Directors. If on any such date no such market maker is making a market in the Common Stock, the fair value of the Common Stock on such date as determined in good faith by the Board of Directors shall be used. The term "Trading Day" shall mean a day on which the principal national securities exchange on which the Common Stock is listed or admitted to trading is open for the transaction of business, or, if the Common Stock is not listed or admitted to trading on any national securities exchange but is quoted by Nasdaq, a day on which Nasdaq reports trades, or, if the Common Stock is not so quoted, a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday on which banking institutions in the State of New York or Texas are not authorized or obligated by law or executive order to close.

(B) In the event that fewer than all of the outstanding shares of the Series A Preferred Stock are to be redeemed, the number of shares to be redeemed shall be determined by the Board of Directors and the shares to be redeemed shall be determined by lot or pro rata as may be determined by the Board of Directors or by any other method that may be determined by the Board of Directors in its sole discretion to be equitable.

(C) Notice of any such redemption shall be given by mailing to the holders of the shares of Series A Preferred Stock to be redeemed a notice of such redemption, first class postage prepaid, not later than the twentieth day and not earlier than the sixtieth day before the date fixed for redemption, at their last address as the same shall appear upon the books of the Company. Each such notice shall state: (i) the redemption date; (ii) the number of shares to be redeemed and, if fewer than all the shares held by such holder are to be redeemed, the number of such shares to be redeemed from such holder; (iii) the redemption price; (iv) the place or places where certificates for such shares are to be surrendered for payment of the redemption price; and (v) that dividends on the shares to be redeemed will cease to accrue on the close of business on such redemption date. Any notice that is mailed in the manner herein provided shall be conclusively presumed to have been duly given, whether or not the shareholder received such notice, and failure duly to give such notice by mail, or any defect in such notice, to any holder of Series A Preferred Stock shall not affect the validity of the proceedings for the redemption of any other shares of Series A Preferred Stock that are to be redeemed. On or after the date fixed for redemption as stated in such notice, each holder of the shares called for redemption shall surrender the certificate evidencing such shares to the Company at the place designated in such notice and shall thereupon be entitled to receive payment of the redemption price. If fewer than all the shares represented by any such surrendered certificate are redeemed, a new certificate shall be issued representing the unredeemed shares.

(D) The shares of Series A Preferred Stock shall not be subject to the operation of any purchase, retirement or sinking fund.

9. Ranking. The Series A Preferred Stock shall rank junior to all other series of Preferred Stock (other than any such series of Preferred Stock the terms of which shall provide otherwise) in respect to dividend and liquidation rights, and shall rank senior to the Common Stock as to such matters.

10. Amendment. At any time that any shares of Series A Preferred Stock are outstanding, the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation of the Company shall not be amended in any manner which would materially alter or change the powers, preferences or special rights of the Series A Preferred Stock so as to affect them adversely without the affirmative vote of the holders of at least two-thirds or more of the outstanding shares of Series A Preferred Stock, voting separately as a class.

11. Fractional Shares. Series A Preferred Stock may be issued in fractions of a share that shall entitle the holder, in proportion to such holder's fractional shares, to exercise voting rights, receive dividends, participate in distributions and to have the benefit of all other rights of holders of Series A Preferred Stock.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC. has caused this Statement to be executed on its behalf by the undersigned officer this ___ day of _____, 200_.

CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.

Name:
Title:

[Form of Rights Certificate]

Certificate No. R-

_____ Rights

NOT EXERCISABLE AFTER DECEMBER 31, 2011 OR EARLIER IF REDEEMED OR EXCHANGED BY THE COMPANY. THE RIGHTS ARE SUBJECT TO REDEMPTION, AT THE OPTION OF THE COMPANY, AT \$.005 PER RIGHT ON THE TERMS SET FORTH IN THE RIGHTS AGREEMENT. UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES SET FORTH IN THE RIGHTS AGREEMENT, RIGHTS BENEFICIALLY OWNED BY OR TRANSFERRED TO ANY PERSON WHO IS, WAS OR BECOMES AN ACQUIRING PERSON OR AN AFFILIATE OR ASSOCIATE THEREOF (AS SUCH TERMS ARE DEFINED IN THE RIGHTS AGREEMENT) AND CERTAIN TRANSFEREES THEREOF WILL BECOME NULL AND VOID AND WILL NO LONGER BE TRANSFERABLE.

RIGHTS CERTIFICATE

CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.

This certifies that _____, or registered assigns, is the registered owner of the number of Rights set forth above, each of which entitles the owner thereof, subject to the terms, provisions and conditions of the Rights Agreement, dated as of January 1, 2002 as it may from time to time be supplemented or amended (the "Rights Agreement"), between CenterPoint Energy, Inc., a Texas corporation (the "Company"), and JPMorgan Chase Bank, (the "Rights Agent"), to purchase from the Company at any time prior to 5:00 p.m. (New York City time) on December 31, 2011 at the office or offices designated by the Rights Agent for such purpose, or its successors as Rights Agent, one one-thousandth of a fully paid, nonassessable share (a "Fractional Share") of Series A Preferred Stock (the "Preferred Stock") of the Company, at a purchase price of \$42.50 per one one-thousandth of a share (the "Purchase Price"), upon presentation and surrender of this Rights Certificate with the Form of Election to Purchase and related Certificate set forth on the reverse hereof duly executed. The Purchase Price may be paid in cash or by certified check, cashier's or official bank check or bank draft payable to the order of the Company or the Rights Agent. The number of Rights evidenced by this Rights Certificate (and the number of shares which may be purchased upon exercise thereof) set forth above, and the Purchase Price per Fractional Share set forth above, are the number and Purchase Price as of _____, 2002, based on the Preferred Stock as constituted at such date. The Company reserves the right to require prior to the occurrence of a Triggering Event (as such term is defined in the Rights Agreement) that a number of Rights be exercised so that only whole shares of Preferred Stock will be issued.

From and after the first occurrence of a Triggering Event (as such term is defined in the Rights Agreement), if the Rights evidenced by this Rights Certificate are beneficially owned by or transferred to (i) an Acquiring Person or an Associate or Affiliate of an Acquiring Person (as such terms are defined in the Rights Agreement), (ii) a transferee of any such

Acquiring Person, Associate or Affiliate, or (iii) under certain circumstances specified in the Rights Agreement, a transferee of a person who, concurrently with or after such transfer, became an Acquiring Person or an Affiliate or Associate of an Acquiring Person, such Rights shall, with certain exceptions, become null and void in the circumstances set forth in the Rights Agreement, and no holder hereof shall have any rights whatsoever with respect to such Rights from and after the occurrence of such Triggering Event.

As provided in the Rights Agreement, the Purchase Price and the number and kind of shares of Preferred Stock or other securities or assets that may be purchased upon the exercise of the Rights evidenced by this Rights Certificate are subject to modification and adjustment upon the happening of certain events, including Triggering Events.

This Rights Certificate is subject to all of the terms, provisions and conditions of the Rights Agreement, which terms, provisions and conditions are hereby incorporated herein by reference and made a part hereof and to which Rights Agreement reference is hereby made for a full description of the rights, limitations of rights, obligations, duties and immunities hereunder of the Rights Agent, the Company and the holders of the Rights Certificates, which limitations of rights include the temporary suspension of the exercisability of such Rights under the specific circumstances set forth in the Rights Agreement. Copies of the Rights Agreement are on file at the above-mentioned office of the Rights Agent and are also available upon written request to the Company.

This Rights Certificate, with or without other Rights Certificates, upon surrender at the office or offices designated by the Rights Agent for such purpose, may be exchanged for another Rights Certificate or Rights Certificates of like tenor and date evidencing Rights entitling the holder to purchase a like aggregate number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock as the Rights evidenced by the Rights Certificate or Rights Certificates surrendered shall have entitled such holder to purchase. If this Rights Certificate shall be exercised in part, the holder shall be entitled to receive upon surrender hereof another Rights Certificate or Rights Certificates for the number of whole Rights not exercised.

Subject to the provisions of the Rights Agreement, the Rights evidenced by this Certificate (i) may be redeemed by the Company at its option at a redemption price of \$.005 per Right, payable, at the election of the Company, in cash or shares of Common Stock or such other consideration as the Board of Directors may determine, at any time prior to the time a Person becomes an Acquiring Person or (ii) may be exchanged in whole or in part for shares of the Company's Common Stock, without par value, and/or other equity securities of the Company deemed to have the same value as shares of Common Stock, at any time prior to a person's becoming the beneficial owner of 50% or more of the shares of Common Stock outstanding or the occurrence of a Flip-Over Event.

No fractional shares of Preferred Stock are required to be issued upon the exercise of any Right or Rights evidenced hereby (other than, except as set forth above, fractions that are integral multiples of a Fractional Share of Preferred Stock, which may, at the election of the Company, be evidenced by depositary receipts), but in lieu thereof a cash payment may be made, as provided in the Rights Agreement.

No holder of this Rights Certificate, as such, shall be entitled to vote or receive dividends or be deemed for any purpose the holder of shares of Preferred Stock or of any other securities of the Company that may at any time be issuable on the exercise hereof, nor shall anything contained in the Rights Agreement or herein be construed to confer upon the holder hereof, as such, any of the rights of a shareholder of the Company or any right to vote for the election of directors or upon any matter submitted to shareholders at any meeting thereof, or to give or withhold consent to any corporate action, or to receive notice of meetings or other actions affecting shareholders (except as provided in the Rights Agreement), or to receive dividends or subscription rights, or otherwise, until the Right or Rights evidenced by this Rights Certificate shall have been exercised as provided in the Rights Agreement.

This Rights Certificate shall not be valid or obligatory for any purpose until it shall have been countersigned by the Rights Agent.

WITNESS the facsimile signature of the proper officers of the Company and its corporate seal.

Dated as of _____, 2002

ATTEST: CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.

By _____
Secretary Title:

Countersigned:
JPMORGAN CHASE BANK

By _____
Authorized Signature

FORM OF ASSIGNMENT

(To be executed by the registered holder if such holder desires to transfer any Rights evidenced by the Rights Certificate.)

FOR VALUE RECEIVED _____ hereby sells, assigns and transfers unto _____

(Please print name and address of transferee)

_____ Rights evidenced by this Rights Certificate, together with all right, title and interest therein, and does hereby irrevocably constitute and appoint _____ Attorney, to transfer the said Rights on the books of the within-named Company, with full power of substitution.

Dated: _____, 20__

Signature

Signature Guaranteed:

Signatures must be guaranteed by a member firm of a national securities exchange, a member of the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc., a commercial bank or trust company having an office or correspondent in the United States or another eligible guarantor institution (as defined pursuant to Rule 17Ad-15 under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended).

CERTIFICATE

The undersigned hereby certifies by checking the appropriate boxes that:

(1) the Rights evidenced by this Rights Certificate [] are [] are not being sold, assigned and transferred by or on behalf of a Person who is or was an Acquiring Person or an Affiliate or Associate of an Acquiring Person (as such terms are defined pursuant to the Rights Agreement);

(2) after due inquiry and to the best knowledge of the undersigned, it [] did [] did not acquire the Rights evidenced by this Rights Certificate from any Person who is, was or subsequently became an Acquiring Person or an Affiliate or Associate of an Acquiring Person or who is a direct or indirect transferee of an Acquiring Person or of an Affiliate or Associate of an Acquiring Person.

Dated: _____, 20__

Signature

Signature Guaranteed:

Signatures must be guaranteed by a member firm of a national securities exchange, a member of the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc., a commercial bank or trust company having an office or correspondent in the United States or another eligible guarantor institution (as defined pursuant to Rule 17Ad-15 under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended).

NOTICE

The signatures to the foregoing Assignment and Certificate must correspond to the name as written upon the face of this Rights Certificate in every particular, without alteration or enlargement or any change whatsoever.

FORM OF ELECTION TO PURCHASE

(To be executed if holder desires to exercise
Rights represented by the Rights Certificate.)

To: CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.

The undersigned hereby irrevocably elects to exercise
_____ Rights represented by this Rights Certificate to purchase the shares
of Preferred Stock issuable upon the exercise of the Rights (or such other
securities of the Company or of any other person that may be issuable upon the
exercise of the Rights) and requests that certificates for such shares (or other
securities) be issued in the name of and delivered to:

Please insert social security
or other identifying number

(Please print name and address)

If such number of Rights shall not be all the Rights evidenced
by this Rights Certificate, a new Rights Certificate for the balance of such
Rights shall be registered in the name of and delivered to:

Please insert social security
or other identifying number

(Please print name and address)

Dated: _____, 20__

Signature

Signature Guaranteed:

Signatures must be guaranteed by a member firm of a national securities
exchange, a member of the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc., a
commercial bank or trust company having an office or correspondent in the United
States or another eligible guarantor institution (as defined pursuant to Rule
17Ad-15 under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended).

CERTIFICATE

The undersigned hereby certifies by checking the appropriate boxes that:

(1) the Rights evidenced by this Rights Certificate [] are [] are not being exercised by or on behalf of a Person who is or was an Acquiring Person or an Affiliate or Associate of an Acquiring Person (as such terms are defined pursuant to the Rights Agreement);

(2) after due inquiry and to the best knowledge of the undersigned, it [] did [] did not acquire the Rights evidenced by this Rights Certificate from any Person who is, was or became an Acquiring Person or an Affiliate or Associate of an Acquiring Person or who is a direct or indirect transferee of an Acquiring Person or of an Affiliate or Associate of an Acquiring Person.

Dated: _____, 20__

Signature

Signature Guaranteed:

Signatures must be guaranteed by a member firm of a national securities exchange, a member of the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc., a commercial bank or trust company having an office or correspondent in the United States or another eligible guarantor institution (as defined pursuant to Rule 17Ad-15 under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended).

NOTICE

The signatures to the foregoing Election to Purchase and Certificate must correspond to the name as written upon the face of this Rights Certificate in every particular, without alteration or enlargement or any change whatsoever.

SUMMARY OF RIGHTS TO PURCHASE PREFERRED STOCK

Effective November 1, 2001, the Board of Directors of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. (the "Company") authorized the issuance of one right ("Right") for each share of the Company's Common Stock, without par value ("Common Stock"), of the Company issued from and after the Effective Time. Each Right entitles the registered holder to purchase from the Company a unit consisting of one one-thousandth of a share (a "Fractional Share") of Series A Preferred Stock, without par value (the "Preferred Stock"), at a purchase price of \$42.50 per Fractional Share, subject to adjustment (the "Purchase Price"). The description and terms of the Rights are set forth in a Rights Agreement, dated as of January 1, 2002, as it may from time to time be supplemented or amended (the "Rights Agreement"), between the Company and JPMorgan Chase Bank, as Rights Agent.

Detachment of Rights; Exercisability. Initially, the Rights will be attached to all Common Stock certificates, and no separate certificates for the Rights ("Rights Certificates") will be distributed. The Rights will separate from the Common Stock and a "Distribution Date" will occur, with certain exceptions, upon the earlier of (i) ten days following a public announcement that a person or group of affiliated or associated persons (an "Acquiring Person") has acquired, or obtained the right to acquire, beneficial ownership of 20% or more of the outstanding shares of Common Stock (the date of the announcement being the "Stock Acquisition Date"), or (ii) ten business days following the commencement of a tender offer or exchange offer that would result in a person's becoming an Acquiring Person. In certain circumstances, the Distribution Date may be deferred by the Board of Directors. Certain inadvertent acquisitions will not result in a person's becoming an Acquiring Person if the person promptly divests itself of sufficient Common Stock. Until the Distribution Date, (a) the Rights will be evidenced by the Common Stock certificates and will be transferred with and only with such Common Stock certificates, (b) new Common Stock certificates issued will contain a notation incorporating the Rights Agreement by reference and (c) the surrender for transfer of any Common Stock certificate will also constitute the transfer of the Rights associated with the Common Stock represented by such certificate.

The Rights are not exercisable until the Distribution Date and will expire at the close of business on December 31, 2011, unless earlier redeemed or exchanged by the Company as described below.

As soon as practicable after the Distribution Date, Rights Certificates will be mailed to holders of record of Common Stock as of the close of business on the Distribution Date and, from and after the Distribution Date, the separate Rights Certificates alone will represent the Rights. All shares of Common Stock issued prior to the Distribution Date will be issued with Rights. Shares of Common Stock issued after the Distribution Date in connection with certain employee benefit plans or upon conversion of certain securities will be issued with Rights. Except as otherwise determined by the Board of Directors, no other shares of Common Stock issued after the Distribution Date will be issued with Rights.

Flip-In. In the event (a "Flip-In Event") that a person becomes an Acquiring Person (except pursuant to a tender or exchange offer for all outstanding shares of Common Stock at a price and on terms that a majority of the independent directors of the Company determines to be fair to and otherwise in the best interests of the Company and its shareholders (a "Permitted Offer")), each holder of a Right will thereafter have the right to receive, upon exercise of such Right, a number of shares of Common Stock (or, in certain circumstances, cash, property or other securities of the Company) having a Current Market Price (as defined in the Rights Agreement) equal to two times the exercise price of the Right. Notwithstanding the foregoing, following the occurrence of any Triggering Event, all Rights that are, or (under certain circumstances specified in the Rights Agreement) were, beneficially owned by or transferred to an Acquiring Person (or by certain related parties) will be null and void in the circumstances set forth in the Rights Agreement.

Flip-Over. In the event (a "Flip-Over Event") that, at any time from and after the time an Acquiring Person becomes such, (i) the Company is acquired in a merger or other business combination transaction (other than certain mergers that follow a Permitted Offer), or (ii) 50% or more of the Company's assets, cash flow or earning power is sold or transferred, each holder of a Right (except Rights that are voided as set forth above) shall thereafter have the right to receive, upon exercise, a number of shares of common stock of the acquiring company having a Current Market Price equal to two times the exercise price of the Right. Flip-In Events and Flip-Over Events are collectively referred to as "Triggering Events."

Preferred Stock. After the Distribution Date, each Right will entitle the holder to purchase a Fractional Share of Preferred Stock, which will be essentially the economic equivalent of one share of Common Stock.

Antidilution. The number of outstanding Rights associated with a share of Common Stock, or the number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock issuable upon exercise of a Right and the Purchase Price, are subject to adjustment in the event of a stock dividend on, or a subdivision, combination or reclassification of, the Common Stock occurring prior to the Distribution Date. The Purchase Price payable, and the number of Fractional Shares of Preferred Stock or other securities or property issuable, upon exercise of the Rights are subject to adjustment from time to time to prevent dilution in the event of certain transactions affecting the Preferred Stock.

With certain exceptions, no adjustment in the Purchase Price will be required until cumulative adjustments amount to at least 1% of the Purchase Price. No fractional shares of Preferred Stock that are not integral multiples of a Fractional Share are required to be issued and, in lieu thereof, an adjustment in cash may be made based on the market price of the Preferred Stock on the last trading date prior to the date of exercise. Pursuant to the Rights Agreement, the Company reserves the right to require prior to the occurrence of a Triggering Event that, upon any exercise of Rights, a number of Rights be exercised so that only whole shares of Preferred Stock will be issued.

Redemption of Rights. At any time until the time a person becomes an Acquiring Person, the Company may redeem the Rights in whole, but not in part, at a price of \$.005 per Right, payable, at the option of the Company, in cash, shares of Common Stock or such other

consideration as the Board of Directors may determine. Immediately upon the effectiveness of the action of the Board of Directors ordering redemption of the Rights, the Rights will terminate and the only right of the holders of Rights will be to receive the \$.005 redemption price.

Exchange of Rights. At any time after the occurrence of a Flip-In Event and prior to a person's becoming the beneficial owner of 50% or more of the shares of Common Stock then outstanding or the occurrence of a Flip-Over Event, the Company may exchange the Rights (other than Rights owned by an Acquiring Person or an affiliate or an associate of an Acquiring Person, which will have become void), in whole or in part, at an exchange ratio of one share of Common Stock, and/or other equity securities deemed to have the same value as one share of Common Stock, per Right, subject to adjustment.

Substitution. If the Company has an insufficient number of authorized but unissued shares of Common Stock available to permit an exercise or exchange of Rights upon the occurrence of a Flip-In Event, it may substitute certain other types of property for the Common Stock so long as the total value received by the holder of the Rights is equivalent to the value of the Common Stock that would otherwise have been received. The Company may substitute cash, property, equity securities or debt of the Company, effect a reduction in the exercise price of the Right or use any combination of the foregoing.

No Rights as a Shareholder. Until a Right is exercised, the holder thereof, as such, will have no rights as a shareholder of the Company, including, without limitation, the right to vote or to receive dividends.

Amendment of Terms of Rights. Other than the Redemption Price, any of the provisions of the Rights Agreement may be amended by the Board of Directors of the Company prior to the time a Person becomes an Acquiring Person. Thereafter, the provisions of the Rights Agreement may be amended by the Board of Directors in order to cure any ambiguity, defect or inconsistency or to make changes that do not materially and adversely affect the interests of holders of Rights (excluding the interests of any Acquiring Person).

Rights Agent. JPMorgan Chase Bank serves as Rights Agent with regard to the Rights.

Rights Agreement; Summary. A copy of the Rights Agreement is available free of charge from the Company. This summary description of the Rights does not purport to be complete and is qualified in its entirety by reference to the Rights Agreement, which is incorporated herein by reference.

CONTRIBUTION AND REGISTRATION AGREEMENT

CONTRIBUTION AND REGISTRATION AGREEMENT ("Agreement"), dated as of December 18, 2001, among Reliant Energy, Incorporated, a Texas corporation ("REI"), CenterPoint Energy, Inc., a Texas corporation ("CEP"), and The Northern Trust Company, an Illinois Corporation, in its capacity as trustee ("Trustee") under the Reliant Energy, Incorporated Master Retirement Trust (the "Trust").

WHEREAS, as of the close of business on December 17, 2001, REI has contributed (the "Contribution") to the Trust an aggregate of 4,511,691 shares (the "Contribution Shares") of common stock, without par value, of REI ("REI Common Stock") which are "restricted securities" as defined in Rule 144 under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "Act");

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Agreement and Plan of Merger dated as of October 19, 2001 (the "Merger Agreement") among REI, Reliant Energy MergerCo, Inc. and CEP, each outstanding share of REI Common Stock will be converted into one share of common stock, without par value, of CEP ("CEP Common Stock") at the effective time (the "Effective Time") of the merger provided for in the Merger Agreement;

WHEREAS, subsequent to the Effective Time, CEP intends to distribute (the "Distribution") to its shareholders, including the Trust, the shares of common stock, par value \$0.001 per share, of RRI ("RRI Common Stock") which CEP will own after the Effective Time; and

WHEREAS, the parties hereto have agreed, subject to the terms and conditions contained herein, to execute and deliver this Agreement;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the premises and of the mutual agreements and covenants hereinafter set forth, the parties hereto agree as follows:

1. The Contribution. As of the close of business on December 17, 2001, REI has contributed to the Trust the Contribution Shares.

2. Representations and Warranties of the Trust. The Trust hereby represents and warrants to the REI and CEP as follows:

(a) the making and performance of this Agreement have been duly authorized by all necessary action of the Trust;

(b) this Agreement has been duly executed and delivered by the Trust and constitutes a valid and binding agreement of the Trust enforceable against it in accordance with its terms, except to the extent limited by (i) applicable bankruptcy, insolvency, reorganization, moratorium and similar laws of general application related to the enforcement of creditor's rights generally and (ii) general principles of equity; and

(c) the Trust acknowledges that the acquisition of the Contribution Shares by it pursuant to Section 1 hereof has not and will not be registered under the Act, in

reliance upon the exemption afforded by Section 4(2) thereof for transactions by an issuer not involving a public offering, or under any state securities laws. The Trust is an "accredited investor" as that term is defined in Regulation D promulgated under the Act and is acquiring the Contribution Shares solely for its own account, for investment purposes only, and not with a view to the distribution thereof. The Trust will not sell or otherwise dispose of such securities except in compliance with the registration requirements or exemption provisions under the Act and the rules and regulations thereunder and, prior to any sale or other disposition of any such securities other than in a sale registered under the Act, will deliver to REI or CEP, as applicable, an opinion of counsel reasonably satisfactory to REI or CEP, as applicable, to the effect that such registration is unnecessary.

3. Representations and Warranties of REI. REI represents and warrants to the Trust as follows:

(a) the making and performance of this Agreement have been duly authorized by all necessary corporate action of REI;

(b) this Agreement has been duly executed and delivered by REI and constitutes a valid and binding agreement of REI enforceable against it in accordance with its terms, except to the extent limited by (i) applicable bankruptcy, insolvency, reorganization, moratorium and similar laws of general application related to the enforcement of creditor's rights generally and (ii) general principles of equity; and

(c) REI had valid title to the Contribution Shares transferred by it to the Trust free and clear of all claims, liens, charges, encumbrances and security interests, and upon delivery of the Contribution Shares the Trust acquired good title to the Contribution Shares, free and clear of any claims, liens, charges, encumbrances or security interests.

4. Representations and Warranties of CEP. CEP represents and warrants to the Trust as follows:

(a) the making and performance of this Agreement have been duly authorized by all necessary corporate action of CEP; and

(b) this Agreement has been duly executed and delivered by CEP and constitutes a valid and binding agreement of CEP enforceable against it in accordance with its terms, except to the extent limited by (i) applicable bankruptcy, insolvency, reorganization, moratorium and similar laws of general application related to the enforcement of creditor's rights generally and (ii) general principles of equity.

5. Registration.

(a) In consideration of the willingness of the Trust to accept the shares of REI Common Stock pursuant to the Contribution, and subject to the performance by the Trust of its covenants set forth herein, REI or CEP, as applicable (the "Registrant"), (i) shall prepare and file, within 15 business days following the receipt from the Trust of a written request to do so, with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "Commission") a registration statement on Form S-3 (the "Registration Statement") with respect to the offering and sale by the Trust on a delayed or continuous basis pursuant to Rule 415 under the Act, of (A) if prior to the Effective

Time, the 4,511,691 shares of REI Common Stock issued pursuant to the Contribution or (B) if after the Effective Time, the 4,511,691 shares of CEP Common Stock issued pursuant to the Merger Agreement (in either case, the "Shares"), and (ii) shall use commercially reasonable efforts to cause the Registration Statement to become effective as soon as possible after the filing thereof so as to permit the secondary resale of the Shares by the Trust. As used herein, the term "Registration Statement" means the Registration Statement, including exhibits and financial statements and schedules and documents incorporated by reference therein, as amended, when it becomes effective under the Act and, in the case of the references to the Registration Statement as of a date subsequent to the effective date, as amended or supplemented as of such date. As used herein, the term "Prospectus" means the prospectus included in the Registration Statement as of the date it becomes effective under the Act and, in the case of references to the Prospectus as of a date subsequent to the effective date of the Registration Statement, as amended or supplemented as of such date, including all documents incorporated by reference therein, as amended, and each prospectus supplement relating to the offering and sale of any of the Shares. At least five business days prior to filing with the Commission of the Registration Statement or Prospectus or any supplements or amendments thereto, the Registrant shall furnish draft copies thereof (excluding the documents incorporated by reference therein) to the Trust for its review and comment.

(b) The Registrant will use commercially reasonable efforts to cause the Registration Statement to remain effective, and to file with the Commission such amendments and supplements as may be necessary to keep the Prospectus current and in compliance in all material respects with the Act, until the earlier to occur of the following: (i) the sale of all of the Shares covered by the Registration Statement, whether pursuant to the Registration Statement or otherwise; (ii) the second anniversary of the closing of the Contribution; (iii) such time as all Shares may be resold without registration in a single 90-day period pursuant to Rule 144(e) under the Act; or (iv) the Registrant receives an opinion of counsel for the Registrant that all Shares may otherwise be sold without registration. If the Registration Statement ceases to be effective for any reason at any time after it is first declared effective by the Commission (other than because of the sale of all of the Shares registered thereunder), the Registrant shall use commercially reasonable efforts to obtain the prompt withdrawal of any order suspending the effectiveness thereof, and in any event shall, within 30 days after such cessation of effectiveness, amend the Registration Statement in a manner reasonably expected to obtain the withdrawal of the order suspending the effectiveness thereof.

(c) The Registrant shall furnish to the Trust a conformed copy of the Registration Statement as declared effective by the Commission and of each post-effective amendment thereto, and such number of copies of the final Prospectus and of each post-effective amendment or supplement thereto as may reasonably be required to facilitate the distribution of the Shares. Promptly after the Registration Statement has been declared effective by the Commission, the Registrant shall furnish to the Trust a copy of the Commission's order to that effect. Thereafter, in the event that any stop order suspending the effectiveness of the Registration Statement is issued or any proceedings for that purpose are instituted or threatened by the Commission, the Registrant will promptly so notify the Trust.

(d) The Registration Statement shall be prepared by the Registrant in accordance with the Act and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder. The section of

the Prospectus entitled "Selling Shareholder" shall be prepared in accordance with the requirements of Item 507 of Regulation S-K promulgated by the Commission ("Regulation S-K") and shall be based upon the information provided by the Trust to the Registrant pursuant to Section 3(a). The section of the Prospectus entitled "Plan of Distribution" shall be prepared in accordance with the requirements of Item 508 of Regulation S-K and shall provide that the Trust as "Selling Shareholder" may distribute the Shares pursuant to the Registration Statement from time to time in one or more transactions on the New York Stock Exchange, including block trades, in negotiated transactions or in a combination of any such methods of sale or pursuant to any other method or plan of distribution as shall be furnished in writing to the Registrant by or on behalf of the Trust.

(e) The Registrant will, if necessary, register or qualify the Shares to be sold under the securities or blue sky laws of such jurisdictions in the United States as the Trust shall reasonably request; provided, however, that the Registrant shall in no event be required to qualify to do business as a foreign corporation or as a dealer in any jurisdiction where it is not so qualified, to conform its capitalization or the composition of its assets at the time to the securities or blue sky laws of any such jurisdiction, to execute or file any general consent to service of process under the laws of any jurisdiction, to take any action that would subject it to service of process in suits other than those arising out of the offer and sale of Shares, or to subject itself to taxation in any jurisdiction where it has not therefore done so.

(f) The Registrant will immediately notify the Trust in writing (i) of the happening of any event as a result of which the Prospectus includes an untrue statement of a material fact or omits to state any material fact required to be stated therein or necessary to make the statements therein, in light of the circumstances under which they were made, not misleading and (ii) of any request by the Commission or any other regulatory body or other body having jurisdiction for any amendment of or supplement to the Registration Statement or other document relating to such offering and any other written communication relating thereto.

6. Expenses of Registration. All expenses in connection with the Registration Statement, any qualification or compliance with federal or state laws required in connection therewith, and the distribution of the Shares shall, as between the Trust and the Registrant, be borne as follows:

(a) The Registrant shall pay and be responsible for all fees and expenses incident to the performance of its obligations hereunder, including without limitation the registration fee payable under the Act, blue sky fees and expenses, if applicable (subject to the limitations set forth in Section 5(e)), all fees and disbursements of the Registrant's counsel and accountants, and any other accountants who have expressed an opinion on any separate financial statements included or incorporated by reference in the Prospectus, listing fees, and the cost of printing or photocopying the Registration Statement and the Prospectus. The Registrant will not be required to engage the services of a printer with respect to the Registration Statement or the Prospectus.

(b) The Trust shall pay all fees and disbursements of its own counsel and advisers, all stock transfer fees (including the cost of all transfer tax stamps) or related stock transfer expenses, if any, and all other expenses (including brokerage discounts, commissions and fees) related to the distribution of the Shares that have not expressly been assumed by the Registrant.

7. Trust's Covenants Regarding the Shares. The Trust covenants and agrees with the Registrant that:

(a) It will cooperate with the Registrant in connection with the preparation of the Registration Statement, and for so long as the Registrant is obligated to keep the Registration Statement effective, it will provide to the Registrant, in writing, for use in the Registration Statement, all information regarding itself and such other information as may be necessary to enable the Registrant to prepare the Registration Statement and Prospectus covering the Shares and to maintain the effectiveness thereof.

(b) During such time as it may be engaged in a distribution of the Shares, it will comply with Rule 10b-5 and Regulation M promulgated under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act"), and pursuant thereto will, among other things: (i) not engage in any stabilization activity in connection with the securities of the Registrant in contravention of such Rule or Regulation; (ii) distribute the Shares solely in the manner described in the Prospectus; (iii) cause to be furnished to each agent or broker-dealer to or through whom the Shares may be offered, or to the offeree if an offer is made directly by it, such copies of the Prospectus (as amended and supplemented to such date) and documents incorporated by reference therein as may be required by such agent, broker-dealer or offeree or applicable law; and (iv) not bid for or purchase any securities of the Registrant or attempt to induce any person to purchase any securities of the Registrant other than as permitted under the Exchange Act.

(c) Upon notice requiring the suspension of the distribution of any of the Shares pursuant to the provisions of Section 8, it shall cease distributing the Shares until such time as the Registrant or the managing underwriter or underwriters notify it that distribution of the Shares may recommence.

8. Suspension Periods.

(a) If an executive officer of the Registrant determines in his or her good faith judgment that the filing of the Registration Statement with respect to the offering and sale of the Shares by the Trust, the effectiveness of such Registration Statement or the distribution of any of the Shares would interfere with any material pending financing, acquisition, corporate reorganization or any other corporate development involving the Registrant or any of its subsidiaries or would require premature disclosure thereof or of any other material nonpublic information regarding the Registrant or any of its subsidiaries that could be detrimental to the Registrant or to the Registrant and its subsidiaries, taken as a whole, and promptly gives the Trust written notice of such determination, the Registrant shall be entitled to delay the filing or effectiveness of the Registration Statement or to require the Trust to suspend its distribution of the Shares for a reasonable period of time (any such delay or suspension is referred to herein as a "Suspension Period"). A Suspension Period shall commence on and include the date specified as such in the written notice to the Trust (but shall not commence on any day prior to the date on which the Registrant provides such written notice) and shall end on the date on which the Trust is advised in writing by the Registrant that the Registration Statement may be filed or declared effective or that the distribution of the Shares may be resumed. Such

written notice shall contain a general statement of the reasons for such suspension and an estimate of the anticipated period of suspension. In no event shall the aggregate number of days in which Suspension Periods are in effect pursuant to this Section 8(a) exceed 120 days during any period of twelve consecutive calendar months; provided that a single Suspension Period shall not exceed 30 consecutive days. The Registrant will promptly notify the Trust in writing after an event or circumstance giving rise to a Suspension Period no longer exists.

(b) If the Registrant shall file a registration statement pursuant to which the Registrant may offer through an underwriter or group of underwriters its common stock or securities convertible into or exchangeable or exercisable for its common stock, and the managing underwriter or underwriters advise the Registrant that a sale or distribution of the Shares would adversely affect such offering, then upon written notice by or on behalf of such underwriters, the Trust shall, to the extent not inconsistent with applicable law, suspend the distribution of any of the Shares during the 10-day period prior to and the 30-day period following the date of the prospectus or prospectus supplement in respect of such offering, with such 30-day period being subject to early termination by the managing underwriter or underwriters. This Section 8(b) shall not be applicable unless the Registrant and its directors, executive officers and affiliates are subject to written restrictions on their disposition of the Registrant's common stock for a period at least as long as that applicable to the Trust.

9. Indemnification.

(a) The Registrant will indemnify and hold harmless the Trust and each person, if any, who controls the Trust within the meaning of either Section 15 of the Act or Section 20 of the Exchange Act (collectively, the "Trust Indemnified Parties") from and against any losses, claims, damages or liabilities, joint or several, to which the Trust Indemnified Parties may become subject, including any of the foregoing incurred in settlement of any litigation, commenced or threatened, insofar as such losses, claims, damages or liabilities (or actions in respect thereof) arise out of or are based upon any untrue statement or alleged untrue statement of a material fact contained in the Registration Statement or the Prospectus, or any omission or alleged omission to state therein a material fact required to be stated therein or necessary to make the statements therein, in light of the circumstances under which they were made, not misleading, or any violation by the Registrant of the Securities Act or any rule or regulation thereunder applicable to the Registrant and relating to any action or inaction required of the Registrant; and, subject to Section 9(b), the Registrant will reimburse the Trust Indemnified Parties for any legal or other expense reasonably incurred by them in connection with investigating or defending any such loss, claim, damage or liability; provided, however, that the Registrant will not indemnify or hold harmless any Trust Indemnified Party from or against any such loss, claim, damage, liability or expense (i) to the extent such loss, claim, damage, liability or expense arises out of or is based upon any violation of the covenants in Section 7 or of any federal or state securities laws, rules or regulations committed by any of the Trust Indemnified Parties (or any agent, broker-dealer or underwriter engaged by any of them) or (ii) if the untrue statement, omission or allegation thereof upon which such losses, claims, damages, liabilities or expenses are based (x) was made in reliance upon and in conformity with the information provided by a Trust Indemnified Party specifically for use or inclusion in the Registration Statement, or (y) was made in any Prospectus used after such time as the Registrant advised the Trust that the filing of a post-effective amendment or supplement thereto was required, except

the Prospectus as so amended or supplemented, or (z) was made in any Prospectus used after such time as the obligation of the Registrant hereunder to keep the Registration Statement effective and current has expired.

(b) Each party entitled to indemnification under this Section 9 (the "Indemnified Party") shall give notice to the party required to provide indemnification (the "Indemnifying Party") promptly after such Indemnified Party has actual knowledge of any claim as to which indemnity may be sought, and the Indemnifying Party may participate at its own expense in the defense or, if it so elects, to assume the defense of any such claim and any action or proceeding resulting therefrom, including the employment of counsel and the payment of all expenses. The failure of any Indemnified Party to give notice as provided herein shall not relieve the Indemnifying Party from its obligations to indemnify such Indemnified Party, except to the extent that the Indemnified Party's failure to so notify actually prejudices the Indemnifying Party's ability to defend against such claim, action or proceeding; it being understood and agreed that the failure to so notify the Indemnifying Party of a binding settlement agreement or a judgment or award with respect to a claim, action or proceeding prior to execution of such settlement agreement or the entry of such judgment or grant of such award shall constitute actual prejudice to the Indemnifying Party's ability to defend against such claim, action or proceeding. In the event that the Indemnifying Party elects to assume the defense in any action or proceeding, the Indemnified Party shall have the right to employ separate counsel in any such action or proceeding and to participate in the defense thereof, but the fees and expenses of such separate counsel shall be at such Indemnified Party's expense unless (i) the Indemnifying Party has agreed to pay such fees and expenses or (ii) the named parties to any such action or proceeding (including any impleaded parties) include an Indemnified Party and the Indemnifying Party, and such Indemnified Party shall have been advised by counsel that there may be a conflict of interest between such Indemnified Party and the Indemnifying Party in the conduct of the defense of such action (in which case, if such Indemnified Party notifies the Indemnifying Party that it elects to employ separate counsel at the expense of the Indemnifying Party, the Indemnifying Party shall not assume the defense of such action or proceeding on such Indemnified Party's behalf, it being understood, however, that the Indemnifying Party shall not, in connection with any one such action or proceeding or separate but substantially similar or related actions or proceedings arising out of the same general allegations or circumstances, be liable for the reasonable fees and expenses of more than one separate firm of attorneys at any time for all Indemnified Parties). No Indemnifying Party, in the defense of any such claim or litigation, shall, except with the consent of the Indemnified Party, consent to entry of any judgment or enter into any settlement which does not include as an unconditional term thereof the giving by the claimant or plaintiff to such Indemnified Party of a release from all liability in respect to such claim or litigation. The Indemnifying Party shall not be liable for any settlement of any such action or proceeding effected without its written consent (which shall not be unreasonably withheld), but if settled with its written consent or, if there be a final judgment for the plaintiff in any such action or proceeding, the Indemnifying Party shall indemnify and hold harmless the Indemnified Party from and against any loss or liability by reason of such settlement or judgment.

(c) If the indemnification provided for under this Section 9 is unavailable to or insufficient to hold the Indemnified Party harmless under subparagraph (a) above in respect of any losses, claims, damages or liabilities referred to therein for any reason

other than as specified therein, then the Indemnifying Party shall contribute to the amount paid or payable by such Indemnified Party as a result of such losses, claims, damages or liabilities in such proportion as is appropriate to reflect the relative fault of the Indemnifying Party on the one hand and such Indemnified Party on the other in connection with the statements or omissions which resulted in such losses, claims, damages or liabilities, as well as any other relevant equitable considerations. The relative fault shall be determined by reference to, among other things, whether the untrue or alleged untrue statement of a material fact or the omission or alleged omission to state a material fact relates to information supplied by (or omitted to be supplied by) the Indemnifying Party, the parties' relative intent, knowledge, access to information and opportunity to correct or prevent such statement or omission, the relative benefits received by each party from the sale of the Shares and any other equitable considerations appropriate under the circumstances. The amount paid or payable by an Indemnifying Party as a result of the losses, claims, damages or liabilities referred to above in this Section 9(c) shall be deemed to include any legal or other expenses reasonably incurred by such Indemnified Party in connection with investigating or defending any such action or claim. No person guilty of fraudulent misrepresentation (within the meaning of Section 11(f) of the Act) shall be entitled to contribution from any person who was not guilty of such fraudulent misrepresentation.

10. No Third-Party Beneficiaries. NOTHING CONTAINED IN THIS AGREEMENT, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, IS INTENDED TO CONFER UPON ANY PERSON, OTHER THAN THE PARTIES AND THEIR RESPECTIVE SUCCESSORS AND PERMITTED ASSIGNS, ANY RIGHTS, REMEDIES OR OBLIGATIONS UNDER, OR BY REASON OF, THIS AGREEMENT.

11. Entire Agreement. This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties, and supersedes all prior understandings and agreements, with respect to the subject matter hereof.

12. Notices. All notices and other communications under this Agreement shall be in writing and sent by (i) personal delivery (including courier service), (ii) telecopier during normal business hours to the number indicated below, or (iii) first class or registered or certified mail, postage prepaid and addressed as follows (or to such other addresses and telecopier numbers as either party may designate by notice to the other party) (any communication being deemed given upon receipt):

If to the Trust:

Reliant Energy, Incorporated Master Retirement Trust
c/o Benefits Committee
1111 Louisiana
Houston, Texas 77002
Attention: Ms. Lynne Harkel-Rumford

and to:

The Northern Trust Company, as Trustee
50 LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60675
Attention: Mr. Stephen Hearty

If to REI:

Reliant Energy, Incorporated
1111 Louisiana
Houston, Texas 77002
Attention: Ms. Linda Geiger

If to CEP:

CenterPoint Energy, Inc.
1111 Louisiana
Houston, Texas 77002
Attention: Ms. Linda Geiger

13. Amendments and Waivers. No amendment of any provision of this Agreement shall be valid unless the same shall be set forth in an instrument in writing signed by each party. Each party may waive compliance by the other party with any agreements of such party or the fulfillment of any of the conditions to its own obligations set forth herein. Any agreement on the part of any party to any such waiver shall be valid only if set forth in an instrument in writing signed by such party. No waiver by either party of any default, misrepresentation or breach of covenant hereunder, whether intentional or not, shall be deemed to extend to any prior or subsequent default, misrepresentation or breach of covenant hereunder or affect in any way any rights arising by virtue of any prior or subsequent such occurrence. Neither the failure nor any delay by any party in exercising any right, power or privilege under this Agreement will operate as a waiver of such right, power or privilege, and no single or partial exercise of any such right, power or privilege will preclude any other or further exercise of such right, power or privilege or the exercise of any other right, power or privilege.

14. Assignment; Successors and Assigns. This Agreement shall be binding upon, and inure to the benefit of, the parties and their respective successors, but neither this Agreement nor any of the rights, interests or obligations hereunder shall be assigned, by operation of law or otherwise, by any party without the prior written consent of the other parties.

15. Severability. Any provision of this Agreement which is prohibited or unenforceable in any jurisdiction shall, as to such jurisdiction, be ineffective to the extent of such prohibition or unenforceability without invalidating the remaining provisions hereof or affecting the validity or enforceability of such provision in any other jurisdiction.

16. Headings. The descriptive headings of the several Sections of this Agreement are inserted for convenience only and do not constitute a part of this Agreement.

17. Governing Law. This Agreement shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the State of Texas, without regard to principles of conflicts of law.

18. Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in one or more counterparts, each of which when so executed shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

19. Construction. The parties have participated jointly in the negotiation and drafting of this Agreement. In the event any ambiguity or question of intent or interpretation arises, this Agreement shall be construed as if drafted jointly by the parties, and no presumption or burden of proof shall arise favoring or disfavoring either party by virtue of the authorship of any of the provisions of this Agreement. Any reference in this Agreement to any law shall be deemed also to refer to all rules and regulations promulgated thereunder, unless the context requires otherwise. The word "including" shall mean "including without limitation".

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement as of the date first above written.

Date: December 18, 2001

RELIANT ENERGY, INCORPORATED

By: /s/ RUFUS S. SCOTT

Name: Rufus S. Scott
Title: Vice President
Deputy General Counsel

Date: December 18, 2001

CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.

By: /s/ RUFUS S. SCOTT

Name: Rufus S. Scott
Title: Vice President

Date: December 21, 2001

THE NORTHERN TRUST COMPANY, as
Trustee of the Reliant Energy,
Incorporated Master Retirement Trust

By: /s/ STEPHEN HEARTY

Name: Stephen Hearty
Title: Vice President

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' CONSENT

We consent to the incorporation by reference in Registration Statement No. 333-69502 of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. on Form S-4 of our report dated March 28, 2002 appearing in this Annual Report on Form 10-K of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. for the period ended December 31, 2001.

DELOITTE & TOUCHE LLP

Houston, Texas
March 28, 2002