

Agenda Date: November 29, 2006
Item Number: A1

Docket: UG-061670

Company Name: Cascade Natural Gas

Staff: Yohannes Mariam, Regulatory Analyst
Christian Ward, Regulatory Analyst

Recommendation

Approve Cascade's petition for temporary exemption from WAC 480-90-238(4) and allow the company to file its final natural gas integrated resource plan (IRP) by April 15, 2007, instead of December 14, 2006, the original due date.

Background

The Cascade Natural Gas Company ("Cascade" or "the company") filed its 2004 IRP on December 14, 2004. As per WAC 480-90-238(4), Cascade was expected to file its 2006 IRP by December 14, 2006. However, the company initiated telephone conversations with staff regarding the issue of submitting a comprehensive and acceptable IRP document by the deadline of December 14, 2006. The company indicated to staff that it has completed most of its projections of supply and demand. However, the company needs to produce an IRP document that shows a reasonable depth of analysis and adequate involvement of stakeholders.

Cascade has a pending general rate case in Docket No. UG-060256. The company was unable to hold the initial technical advisory meetings because the company staff member that leads the plan development was also a major witness and had to respond to a large volume of data requests in the rate case. Furthermore, the company is expecting to include in the IRP the results of a conservation potential study that is being developed by a third party. In order for the company to produce a document that includes all aspects of the resource plan and allow adequate time for stakeholders to participate, the company consulted staff on the plausibility of filing for an extension.

Commission staff advised the company that there has been a precedent in Avista's natural gas IRP where a petition to delay the submission of the company's IRP by 3 months was granted by the commission. The most important precondition that needs to be met by Cascade in filing the petition for extension is that future filings be on schedule. In other words, the company will file its 2006 plan by April 2007 but file its next resource plan by December 2008. Consequently, the petition is temporary and is intended to allow the company enough time to produce a comprehensive resource plan.

Conclusion

Staff has reviewed Cascade's petition and believes that it is reasonable to grant the company's request. Staff has not received any complaints from stakeholders with respect to the proposed delay in filing the 2006 IRP. Therefore, staff recommends that the commission approve Cascade's request to delay the filing of the final version of the IRP until April 15, 2007.