



PREPROPOSAL STATEMENT OF INQUIRY

CR-101 (October 2017) (Implements RCW 34.05.310)

Do **NOT** use for expedited rule making

CODE REVISER USE ONLY

OFFICE OF THE CODE REVISER
STATE OF WASHINGTON
FILED

DATE: March 18, 2022

TIME: 11:41 AM

WSR 22-07-072

Agency: Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission

Subject of possible rule making: This rulemaking concerns potential changes to current customer notice, credit, and collection rules applicable to the provision of electric and natural gas utility service, including the possibility of permanently eliminating late fees, disconnection fees, and reconnection fees. Topics for consideration include those found in Chapters 480-90 and 480-100 WAC, including electric and natural gas service applications, responsibilities, connections, disconnections, reconnections, refusals, interruptions, deposits, fees, payment arrangements and programs, customer information, billing requirements, billing payments, customer notice, credit, collections, and other related topics.

Statutes authorizing the agency to adopt rules on this subject: RCW 80.01.040, 80.04.160, and Chapter 80.28 RCW

Reasons why rules on this subject may be needed and what they might accomplish: RCW 80.01.040 and 80.04.160 task the Commission with regulating the provision of natural gas and electric service. The Commission enacted rules regarding the provision of electric and natural gas service in Chapters 480-90 and 480-100 WAC.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented numerous challenges, especially for customers struggling to pay bills during a global crisis. Utility companies, in support of and in compliance with the governor's moratorium on utility disconnections, changed fee, disconnection, and reconnection practices by suspending them through September 30, 2021.

On Oct. 20, 2020, the Commission in Docket U-200281, *In the Matter of Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic*, issued Order 01, Extending Suspension of Disconnection of Energy Services for Nonpayment and Adopting Related Requirements. In that order, the Commission determined that it should open a proceeding, when reasonably practicable, "to consider potential long-term changes and improvements to customer notice, credit, and collection rules, including permanent elimination of late fees, disconnection and reconnection fees, and deposits...." Having seen the impact of changed practices on electric and natural gas customers and the utilities that serve them, the Commission finds it in the public interest to consider if longer term changes should be incorporated into Chapters 480-90 and 480-100 WAC. Topics for consideration include those found in Chapters 480-90 and 480-100 WAC, including electric and natural gas service applications, responsibilities, connections, disconnections, reconnections, refusals, interruptions, deposits, fees, payment arrangements and programs, customer information, billing requirements, billing payments, customer notice, credit, collections, and other related topics.

Identify other federal and state agencies that regulate this subject and the process coordinating the rule with these agencies:

Process for developing new rule (check all that apply):

Negotiated rule making

Pilot rule making

Agency study

Other (describe) The UTC uses a collaborative rulemaking process that includes stakeholder workshops, formal comments, and draft rules.

Interested parties can participate in the decision to adopt the new rule and formulation of the proposed rule before publication by contacting:

(If necessary)

Name: Amanda Maxwell

Name:

Address: Washington Utilities and Transportation

Address:

Commission

P.O. Box 47250

Olympia, WA 98504-7250

Phone: (360) 664-1234
Fax:
TTY: 7-1-1 or 1-800-833-6384
Email: records@utc.wa.gov
Web site: www.utc.wa.gov/e-filing
Other:

Phone:
Fax:
TTY:
Email:
Web site:
Other:

Additional comments:

Date: March 18, 2022

Name: Amanda Maxwell

Title: Executive Director and Secretary

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amanda Maxwell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.