

REQUEST NO. 8:

Re: Testimony of Jing Liu, Exh. JL-1CT at 40:6-8.

Please explain why Staff chose the methodology used in Ms. Liu's analysis of analyzing a single month in which applicants received WEAFF and LIHEAP assistance and also received 12 months of bills. Did Staff consider analyzing the full set of customers receiving both LIHEAP and WEAFF and 12 months of bills?

RESPONSE:

There are multiple reasons. Staff wanted to analyze a full year (12 months of bills). The LIHEAP/WEAF program year begins in October and ends in September. Considering this, there were limitations to the information that was available for a full year due to the timing of when Cascade's general rate case was filed. Staff believed it was appropriate, then, to conduct its analysis on the program year ending in September of 2017, and thus beginning in October of 2016. Also, Staff wanted to present the impact of total energy assistance on customers' account balance as of September 30, 2017 in a fair way, especially to account for the fact that some customers may get energy assistance later in the program year and, therefore, did not have a chance to spend down their energy assistance credits before September 30, 2017. As detailed in Staff's response to Public Counsel Data Request No. 1, Staff looked into the average account balances 12 months after their receipt of WEAFF benefit for enrollees in November 2016, December 2016 and January 2017, respectively. The complication is that some, although not all, of those customers received additional energy assistance in the 2017-2018 program year, which started in October 2017. As a result, their average account balances 12 months after receipt of their WEAFF grant [REDACTED] Since the differences in credit balances can be attributed to multiple grants across two program years, Staff does not believe it addresses the question of whether the energy assistance in any given year was excessive in relation to the customer bills within the same period.

Staff did examine the full set of customers receiving any type of energy assistance, including their 12 months of bills, their total energy assistance and their average account balance at the end of the 2016-2017 program year. The results were presented in Exh. JL-1CT at 38-39, particularly Tables 5 and 6.