

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION,

Complainant,

v.

PACIFICORP dba
PACIFIC POWER & LIGHT COMPANY,

Respondent.

Docket UE-210829

**CROSS-ANSWERING TESTIMONY OF
SHAYLEE N. STOKES
DIRECTOR OF THE ENERGY PROJECT**

EXHIBIT SNS-1T

September 12, 2024

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I. INTRODUCTION

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Q. Please state your name and business address.

A. My name is Shaylee Nicole Stokes and I use the pronouns she, her, and hers. My business address is PO Box 7130, Olympia, WA 98507.

Q. By whom are you employed and in what capacity?

A. I am employed by the Washington State Community Action Partnership as the Director of The Energy Project (TEP).

Q. How long have you been employed by the Washington State Community Action Partnership?

A. I became TEP Director in September 2023. Prior to this, I was the Senior Manager of Energy Programs at Hopelink, a Community Action Agency that serves low-income families, children, seniors, and people with disabilities in King County.

Q. Would you please summarize your professional background as it relates to low-income programs?

A. I have been involved in the administration and design of low-income programs for more than a decade. Hopelink hired me in 2010 to screen customers for energy assistance, review customers' energy assistance applications, and award energy assistance grants to low-income customers. Over time, I moved into a management role, training front-line staff in the administration of energy assistance procedures and approving payments. By the time of my departure in 2023, I was the Senior Manager of Energy Programs, leading a staff of more than 30 in the day-to-day administration of energy assistance programs. In 2024, I was selected to serve on the Governance Board of the National Energy & Utility Affordability Coalition. I hold a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Washington in

1 Seattle, WA. I have been a member of PacifiCorp's (Company's) low-income advisory
2 group (LIAG) since 2023.

3 **Q. On whose behalf are you testifying?**

4 A. I am testifying on behalf of The Energy Project, an intervenor in this proceeding that
5 represents the interests of low-income customers and vulnerable populations. TEP works
6 with Community Actions Agencies (CAAs or agencies) that provide low-income
7 weatherization and bill payment assistance for customers in PacifiCorp's service
8 territory.

9 **Q. Have you previously testified before the Washington Utilities and Transportation**
10 **Commission (UTC or Commission)?**

11 A. Yes. I previously provided testimony in this proceeding. I also provided testimony
12 concerning PacifiCorp's 2023 General Rate Case, Docket UE-230172; Puget Sound
13 Energy's 2022 General Rate Case, Docket UE-220066/UG-220067; Puget Sound
14 Energy's 2024 General Rate Case, Docket UG-240004/UG-240005; and Avista
15 Corporation's 2024 General Rate Case, Docket UE-240006/UG-240007. I also
16 previously provided public comments at UTC workshops and have worked closely with
17 Commission staff on numerous occasions, including as a member of PacifiCorp's LIAG
18 since 2023.

19 **Q. Are you sponsoring any exhibits?**

20 A. No.

21 **II. RESPONSE TO TESTIMONY OF NW ENERGY COALITION WITNESS**

22 **THOMPSON**

23 **Q. Please summarize the testimony of witness Thompson.**

1 A. In her testimony, witness Thompson recommends that PacifiCorp establish a minimum
2 designation level of 30% to ensure a specific percentage of the benefits generated by
3 PacifiCorp’s Distributed Energy Resource (DER) programs benefit named communities.
4 Witness Thompson recommends PacifiCorp make the benefits of its DER programs
5 available to all low-income customers and named communities. She specifically
6 recommended numerous strategies to increase enrollment, engagement, and participation
7 of underserved communities in DER programs. I strongly support the recommendations
8 regarding Minimum Designations and DER Program Design made by Witness
9 Thompson.

10 **A. Minimum Designations**

11 **Q. What are witness Thompson’s recommendations for Minimum Designations in**
12 **PacifiCorp’s CEIP?**

13 A. Witness Thompson recommends PacifiCorp set minimum designations for each of its
14 distributed energy (DER) program offerings¹ for the named communities² within its
15 service territory. She recommends PacifiCorp set a minimum designation level requiring
16 30% of energy benefits flowing to named communities by the 2027 Biennial CEIP
17 Update for each of its DER programs. Witness Thompson believes minimum
18 designations are one of the simplest and clearest ways to guarantee that a certain amount
19 of capacity or energy resources will directly benefit named communities. Without

¹ PacifiCorp’s DER programs consist of demand response and energy efficiency programs; PacifiCorp does not currently have distributed solar or distributed storage programs in Washington.

² Named communities consist of both “Vulnerable Populations” and “Highly-Impacted Communities,” terms which are defined under the Clean Energy Transformation Act. RCW §§ 19.405.020(22), (34).

1 minimum designations, she believes it is likely that low-income and named communities
2 will be underrepresented in PacifiCorp's DER programs.

3 Witness Thompson cited numerous authorities to support her 30% minimum designation
4 recommendation, including:

5 (1) The 30% minimum designation adopted in Puget Sound Energy's CEIP.

6 (2) The national Justice40 Initiative, which requires 40% of the overall benefits of
7 Federal investments in clean energy and energy efficiency to flow to
8 disadvantaged communities.

9 (3) PacifiCorp's Revised 2021 CEIP, which provides that 27.1% of its total
10 Washington customer base resides in Highly Impacted Communities.

11 (4) Washington's 2021 Healthy Environment for All Act, which directs 40% of
12 grants and expenditures that create environmental benefits to vulnerable
13 populations and overburdened communities.

14 **Q. Do you support witness Thompson's recommendations for Minimum Designations in**
15 **PacifiCorp's CEIP?**

16 A. Yes. PacifiCorp should set minimum designations for each of its DER program offerings.
17 Low-income customers and customers who reside in named communities face significant
18 barriers to participation in utility programs. Requiring utilities to provide a specific
19 amount of benefits from their DER programs ensures that these benefits ultimately flow
20 to those hard-to-reach communities. I also agree with Witness Thompson's
21 recommendation that the minimum designation be set at 30%. CETA requires the
22 "equitable distribution of energy and nonenergy benefits" to both vulnerable populations

1 and highly impacted communities.³ Establishing a minimum designation level that
2 simply mirrors the percentage of PacifiCorp’s service territory that consists of highly-
3 impacted communities (27%) risks undercounting named communities, which also
4 consist of vulnerable populations that may not be located in highly-impacted
5 communities. Establishing a minimum designation level of 30% will mitigate this risk
6 and increase named community participation in PacifiCorp’s crucial DER programs. I
7 would also point out that a 30% minimum designation is an extremely reasonable
8 baseline given the higher standards from the national Justice40 Initiative and
9 Washington’s Healthy Environment for All Act.

10 **B. DER Program Design**

11 **Q. What are witness Thompson’s recommendations for DER Program Design in**
12 **PacifiCorp’s CEIP?**

13 A. Witness Thompson recommends that benefits from PacifiCorp’s DER programs that are
14 directed towards any underserved community should be made available to all low-income
15 customers and named communities, which is not the case currently. For example, the
16 “Low-Income Weatherization Program” applies only to low-income customers, as
17 defined under CETA, but not to customers who may not qualify as low-income but reside
18 within named communities. The Home Energy Savings and Wattsmart Business
19 Programs provides higher incentives for select measures for customers located in highly-
20 impacted communities, but not to vulnerable populations or low-income customers who
21 do not reside within a highly-impacted community.

³ RCW § 19.405.060(1)(c)(3).

1 Witness Thompson recommends that PacifiCorp establish minimum participation goals
2 to increase named community participation in DER programs. She believes that the
3 CEIP's current requirement to simply "increase" participation is not definite enough to
4 result in a meaningful increase in participation.

5 Witness Thompson recommends the adoption of numerous strategies to increase
6 enrollment, engagement, and participation of underserved communities in DER
7 programs:

8 (1) Carve out a specific portion of budgets for each of its DER programs to named
9 community outreach, recruitment, and participation.

10 (2) Include minimum participation goals to ensure named community and low-
11 income customer representation.

12 (3) Include in the Biennial CEIP clearly defined language addressing how it will
13 target named communities, including vulnerable populations, for recruitment in
14 its DER programs, including strategies like geographic targeting and addressing
15 potential barriers, including language, education, and Wi-Fi access.

16 (4) Offer higher program incentives to low-income customers, highly impacted
17 communities, and vulnerable populations.

18 **Q. Do you support witness Thompson's recommendations for Program Design in**
19 **PacificCorp's CEIP?**

20 A. I agree that PacifiCorp's DER programs should generally offer incentives to low-income
21 customers, highly-impacted communities, and vulnerable populations. Excluding any
22 community from eligibility is contrary to CETA, which requires an equitable distribution
23 of benefits to named communities. However, I recommend preserving the low-income

1 weatherization program’s income eligibility criteria at this time and proceeding with
2 thoughtful discussion and development of enhanced energy efficiency options for
3 customers in named communities who are not income qualified. Existing low-income
4 weatherization services are zero cost to customers solely because of their very limited
5 income status. TEP would prefer not to open the existing low-income weatherization
6 program to higher income customers in named communities because doing so would
7 require foundational changes in the existing weatherization program’s design and could
8 impact its ability to use state and federal funds. However, there is a precedent for
9 providing higher energy efficiency rebates or enhanced services to moderate-income
10 customers, which may be a good model for expanding access to energy efficiency
11 programs in named communities which are not low-income.

12 I recommend PacifiCorp investigate starting a program similar to Puget Sound Energy’s
13 “Efficiency Boost,”⁴ which provides moderate-income customers higher rebates than
14 those generally available to obtain energy efficiency services. These increased benefits
15 could be offered to customers who qualify for certain incomes above the CETA-defined
16 level, or simply provided to all customers in named communities.

17 Further, I agree that PacifiCorp should adopt minimum participation goals for the named
18 communities within its service territory. The simple requirement to “increase” named
19 community participation is not sufficient given the significant barriers that prevent such
20 participation. Each of the strategies recommended by Witness Thompson will likely
21 increase named community participation in PacifiCorp’s DER programs.

⁴ See Puget Sound Energy, *Efficiency Boost*, <https://www.pse.com/en/rebates/efficiency-boost>.

1 **III. RESPONSE TO TESTIMONY OF STAFF WITNESS SIMMONS**

2 **Q. Please summarize the testimony of witness Simmons.**

3 A. Witness Simmons recommends establishing a minimum designation level of 27%. She
4 also recommends PacifiCorp work with its Equity Advisory Groups and other
5 stakeholders to develop mechanisms to ensure effective compliance with the minimum
6 designation level. I generally support Witness Simmons' recommendations, but believe
7 the minimum designation level should be set at 30%.

8 **C. Minimum Designations**

9 **Q. What are Witness Simmons' recommendations for Minimum Designations in**
10 **PacifiCorp's CEIP?**

11 A. Witness Simmons recommends establishing a minimum designation to ensure a specific
12 percentage of the benefits produced by PacifiCorp's DER programs flow to named
13 communities. She recommends the minimum designation be set at 27% of benefits
14 generated by PacifiCorp's DER programs. This minimum designation level is derived
15 from PacifiCorp identifying that 27.3% of its service territory consists of highly-impacted
16 communities.

17 **Q. Do you support Witness Simmons' recommendations for Minimum Designations in**
18 **PacifiCorp's CEIP?**

19 A. Yes, in part. I agree with Witness Simmons' recommendation that the Commission
20 establish a minimum designation. However, I disagree that the minimum designation
21 level should be 27%. The 27% minimum designation level was derived from
22 PacifiCorp's identification of the highly-impacted communities within its service
23 territory. However, named communities consist of both highly-impacted communities
24 *and* vulnerable populations, many of which may not reside within highly-impacted

1 communities. The level of overlap between these two named communities is likely high,
2 but certainly not 100% concurrent. CETA requires benefits to be provided to both
3 communities. To ensure the minimum designation encompasses all named communities,
4 it should be expanded beyond 27%. The minimum designation level should be set at
5 30%, consistent with Witness Thompson's recommendation.

6 **D. DER Program Design**

7 **Q. What are Witness Simmons' recommendations for DER Program Design in**
8 **PacifiCorp's CEIP?**

9 A. To ensure PacifiCorp reaches the 27% minimum designation level, Witness Simmons
10 recommends requiring PacifiCorp to develop mechanisms to ensure its individual DER
11 programs are offered and available to serve customers in named communities, which
12 includes carve-outs for program costs. She also recommends PacifiCorp work with its
13 Equity Advisory Groups to ensure benefits flow to named communities.

14 **Q. Do you support Witness Simmons' recommendations for DER Program Design in**
15 **PacifiCorp's CEIP?**

16 A. Yes. Complying with either a 27% or 30% minimum designation level in an effective
17 manner requires PacifiCorp to work with its Low-Income Advisory Group, Equity
18 Advisory Groups, and other stakeholders to identify and troubleshoot the significant
19 barriers that generally prevent named communities from accessing the benefits in
20 specialized utility programs. Harnessing the knowledge and experience of these
21 stakeholders will greatly increase the effectiveness of PacifiCorp's outreach and ensure a
22 larger share of benefits flow to customers in named communities. However, as discussed
23 above, PacifiCorp should also establish minimum participation goals to guarantee
24 substantial participation by named communities.

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IV. CONCLUSION

Q. Please summarize your testimony.

A. In the testimony laid out above, I highlight the recommendations made by Thompson and Simmons with respect to Minimum Designations and DER Program Design. I explained why I generally support Thompson’s recommendations, and much of what Simmons recommended.

Q. Does this conclude your testimony?

A. Yes.