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December 22, 1999

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STATE OF WASHINGTON
UTILITY AND FINANCE
COMMISSION

Ms. Carol Washburn
Washington State Utilities Commission
P.O. Box 47250
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

Dear Ms. Washburn:

RE: IMPACT OF ELECTRIC (WUTC DOCKET NO. 991606) AND GAS (WUTC DOCKET NO. 991607) UTILITY RATE INCREASES ON LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS - SPOKANE, WA

This letter is written on behalf of the low-income residents of the City of Spokane. Many reside in our inner city neighborhoods and are among our lowest income individuals and families in the state, such as those located in the third legislative district. Families and individuals living on low incomes are the most vulnerable to increases in the cost of products and services that are essential to their daily existence. Electricity and natural gas fall into these essential commodities and any increase in cost taxes already limited incomes. Very limited or non-existent discretionary income offers little options to these families and individuals and forces them into the category of restricted energy usage for heating, lighting and cooking. Many of these families and individuals are forced into uncomfortable and unhealthy living conditions, particularly during the cold winter months.

We urge you to evaluate any rate increase with the low-income consumer in mind. These families and individuals are our friends, relatives, neighbors and fellow human beings. Preventing or reducing the cause of illness through comfortable, appropriately heated homes reduces the need for low-income residents to seek medical services, as well as other public services.

Thank you for considering our concern for low-income families and individuals in Spokane.

Sincerely,

Community Development Board



Al French, Chair

AF:jc

cc: Public Council of Attorney General
900 Fourth Avenue, Suite 2000
MS TB 14
Seattle, WA 98164-1012

