



Puget Sound Energy
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July 27, 2020

Filed Via Web Portal

Mark L. Johnson, Executive Director and Secretary
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
621 Woodland Square Loop SE
Lacey, WA 98503

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07/27/20 15:50
State Of WASH.
UTIL. AND TRANSP.
COMMISSION

Re: Docket U-200281: PSE Comments Regarding Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Puget Sound Energy (“PSE”) appreciates the opportunity to participate in the ongoing discussions regarding the necessary efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges faced by many of PSE’s customers. PSE commends the leadership demonstrated by the Utilities and Transportation Commission (“Commission”) since the beginning of the unprecedented economic downturn resulting from the response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. PSE is providing this communications to the Commission in response to recent workgroup conversations on the topic of disconnections.

On March 10, 2020, PSE voluntarily halted all disconnections of service for non-payment. Additionally, PSE began waiving all late payments fees that same day and suspended the assessment of security deposits beginning on June 18, 2020. These actions are consistent with the Governor’s Proclamation 20-23 issued on June 1, 2020 and that expires on August 1, 2020. Although the Governor’s Proclamation is set to expire on August 1, 2020, PSE recognizes that our customers continue to experience the effects of this unprecedented time. To support our customers during this challenging time, PSE voluntarily commits to a continuation of the moratorium and the extension of the consumer protections outlined in the Governor’s Proclamation until at least September 30, 2020.

During this time, PSE also will continue its outreach efforts to inform customers of the options available to them to seek assistance. Since March, PSE has used a variety of methods to communicate with its customers – through its website, as well as through sending targeted e-mails, direct mail, and targeted ads through paid social media. PSE has also partnered with community non-profits throughout its service territory to distribute informational postcards to customers, with information on how they can seek assistance.

Since March, PSE has also taken steps to improve access to bill assistance to customers, through streamlining its application process for PSE's HELP program, as well as implementing its Crisis Affected Customer Assistance Program ("CACAP") to distribute additional funds to those impacted by COVID-19. To date, CACAP has pledged assistance to over 10,000 of our customers, totaling \$5.8 million. PSE is proud of its efforts to assist those customers who are struggling to pay their utility bills as a result of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In closing, PSE is committed to working with its customers who are in need of assistance to explore options for managing their bill. PSE is also committed to continuing conversations with stakeholders, the Commission, and customers through this workgroup to work towards a set of solutions in this proceeding that work for everyone. As part of these conversations, it is important to consider and determine a clear method of treatment for the associated costs of suspending these fees during this unprecedented time, as well as a defined period for when the moratorium will be lifted. PSE looks forward to actively participating in these conversations in the weeks ahead.

PSE appreciates the opportunity to provide responses to this Notice. Please contact me at (425) 456-2142 or Carol Wallace at (425) 424-7351 for additional information about these comments.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jon Piliaris

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