

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Request of

CASCADE NATURAL GAS
CORPORATION,

Petitioner,

For Less Than Statutory Notice in
Connection with Tariff Revisions

DOCKETS UG-200183

ORDER 01

GRANTING REQUEST FOR LESS
THAN STATUTORY NOTICE;
ALLOWING TARIFF REVISIONS TO
BECOME EFFECTIVE

BACKGROUND

- 1 On March 16, 2020, Cascade Natural Gas Corporation (Cascade or Company) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) revisions to its currently effective natural gas Tariff WN U-3, designated as Fourth Revision of Sheet No. 10-B Rule 6 Billings and Payments. The Company filed replacement pages on March 16, 2020. The purpose of these tariff revisions is to suspend the application of Cascade's Late Payment Charge in certain situations related to disconnection of natural gas service. Concurrent with the proposed revisions, the Company also filed a request to allow the tariff revisions to become effective with less than statutory notice as permitted by WAC 480-80-122.
- 2 RCW 80.28.060 and WAC 480-80-121 require 30 days' notice to the Commission prior to the stated effective date of the tariff. The tariff sheets bear an effective date of April 17, 2020, consistent with the required 30-day statutory notice. The Company, however, requests a March 18, 2020, effective date to allow Cascade to immediately respond to the rapidly changing conditions customers are facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3 Commission staff (Staff) reviewed the proposed tariff revisions and agree that they are appropriate in light of the emergent circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the potential adverse effects the virus may have on customers in Cascade's service territory. In addition, Cascade will post the proposed tariff changes, as required by law and the Commission's rules and regulations, and communicate them on its website, by telephone, and by mail in accordance with WAC 480-90-193.
- 4 Staff believes the proposed tariff revisions are reasonable and that less than statutory notice is consistent with the public interest. Staff recommends that the Commission grant

Cascade's request to allow the proposed tariff revisions to go into effect with less than statutory notice on March 18, 2020.

DISCUSSION

5 We agree with Staff that the proposed revisions, which were filed in response to an emergency situation that has the potential to place a portion of Cascade's most vulnerable customers at risk of disconnection, are decidedly in the public interest.

6 We also grant the Company's request for less than statutory notice. Pursuant to RCW 80.28.060 and WAC 480-80-122, the Commission may allow tariff changes, for good cause shown, without requiring 30 days' notice by order specifying the changes to be made and the time when the Order shall take effect. Here, we find that the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated issues that could result from disconnecting utility service during a state of emergency unequivocally constitutes good cause to permit the tariff revisions to become effective on less than statutory notice.

Accordingly, we allow the tariff revisions to become effective on less than statutory notice.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

7 (1) The Commission is an agency of the State of Washington vested by statute with the authority to regulate the rates, regulations, practices, accounts, securities, transfers of property and affiliated interests of public service companies, including natural gas companies.

8 (2) Cascade is a natural gas company and a public service company subject to Commission jurisdiction.

9 (3) This matter came before the Commission at a special open meeting on March 17, 2020.

10 (4) Staff has reviewed Cascade's request in Docket UG-200183 and recommends the Commission approve the proposed tariff revisions. Staff further recommends that the Commission grant the Company's request to allow the revised tariff pages to become effective on less than statutory notice.

11 (5) Cascade is subject to RCW 80.28.060 and WAC 480-80-121, which require natural gas companies to file changes in any rate, charge or service with 30 days' notice. For good cause shown, however, the Commission may allow changes

without requiring 30 days' notice by order specifying the changes to be made and the time when the Order shall take effect.¹

- 12 (6) Based on the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting state of emergency, the Commission finds good cause to allow the tariff revisions filed by Cascade on March 16, 2020, as revised on March 16, 2020, to become effective with less than statutory notice on March 18, 2020.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 13 (1) Cascade Natural Gas Corporation's request for less than statutory notice is granted.
- 14 (2) The tariff revisions filed by Cascade Natural Gas Corporation on March 16, 2020, as revised on March 16, 2020, shall become effective on less than statutory notice on March 18, 2020.
- 15 (3) The Commission retains jurisdiction over this matter for the purposes of effectuating this Order.

The Commissioners, having determined this Order to be consistent with the public interest, directed the Secretary to enter this Order.

DATED at Lacey, Washington, and effective March 17, 2020.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

MARK L. JOHNSON
Executive Director and Secretary

¹ WAC 480-80-122.