

**Docket Nos. UE-170485 and UG-170486 (Consolidated) -  
Vol. II**

**Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission v.  
Avista Corporation**

**November 8, 2017**



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BEFORE THE WASHINGTON  
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND	)	DOCKET NOS. UE-170485
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION,	)	and UG-170486
	)	
Complainant,	)	
	)	
vs.	)	
	)	
AVISTA CORPORATION, d/b/a	)	
AVISTA UTILITIES,	)	
	)	
Respondent.	)	
_____	)	

VOLUME II  
PUBLIC COMMENTS HEARING  
November 8, 2017  
6:00 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.  
4001 North Cook Street  
Spokane, Washington

REPORTED BY:  
RACHAEL L. HALL, CCR NO. 3265

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1 APPEARANCES:

2 WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION  
3 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONERS:

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5 ANN RENDAHL, Commissioner  
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1 SPOKANE, WASHINGTON; WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2017

2 6:00 p.m.

3  
4  
5 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Good evening. It is November 8,  
6 2017, and this is a meeting of the Washington Utilities  
7 and Transportation Commission. And we are here tonight  
8 in Spokane to take public comments on a rate increase  
9 proceeding that is before the UTC at this time in dockets  
10 UE-170485 and UG-170486.

11 On May 26, 2017, Avista filed with the Commission a  
12 request to increase -- increase its electric and natural  
13 gas rates. Avista proposed a three-year rate plan for  
14 electric and natural gas service with rate increases  
15 going into effect on May 1st of each year of the rate  
16 plan. They propose to increase the monthly basic charge  
17 to \$10 for both electric and natural gas services in the  
18 first year of the rate plan, and if approved, these  
19 increases will impact your bills as follows:

20 In 2018, the average monthly bill for customers  
21 kilowatt hours would be \$95.14; in 2019, it would be  
22 \$97.67; and then finally in 2020, \$100.28. This are  
23 increases of -- in 2018, 12 percent; followed by an  
24 increase of 2.4 percent in 2019; and 2020, 2.5 percent.

25 For natural gas, the proposed increases affecting an

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1 average monthly bill for customers using 65 therm for  
2 2018 would be \$61.39; 2019, \$63.92; and finally in 2020,  
3 \$66.53. Those are increases in 2018 of 5.4 percent; in  
4 2019, 2.6 percent; and in 2020, 2.7 percent.

5 So Avista states the increases are needed for plan  
6 capital investments, a generation for facilities equipped  
7 with assistive performance, growth and capital  
8 investments and operating expenses that outpace revenues  
9 and increases in the cost of purchased electricity on the  
10 market, among other things.

11 So the Utilities and Transportation Commission  
12 generally deals with rate increases in an adjudicative  
13 proceeding. That means the three of us sit as judges in  
14 these proceedings, and we take cases and hear the cases  
15 in compliance with the Administrative Procedures Act,  
16 which means we have several parties before the  
17 Commission.

18 The company, Avista, obviously, is a party. Our  
19 Commission staff is a separate party, and then we have  
20 the intervenors, such as environmental groups, industrial  
21 customers, consumer advocates and low-income advocates.

22 The case is generally a trial, a multi-day trial  
23 that we hold in Olympia, Washington, and we hear  
24 testimony from witnesses for all the parties and we make  
25 our decision. An important part of our decision-making

1 is that we want to hear from the public. We need to hear  
2 your views on how this request affects you, how you feel  
3 about it, and that is news that, really, we want to know  
4 what you're thinking. It does inform our decision.

5 So that's why we are here tonight. This is part of  
6 the adjudication. We have a court reporter here with us,  
7 so if you're going to comment tonight, please speak  
8 clearly and slowly so that she can hear you.

9 We also have representatives of Commission staff.  
10 Where is -- oh, okay. There's our attorney general --  
11 the UTC's Assistant Attorney General Chris Casey is here.  
12 We also have a representative of the Public Counsel unit  
13 of the Attorney General's office, and that's Assistant  
14 Attorney General Armikka Bryant, so if you have questions  
15 for him. We also have a number of representatives from  
16 the company here that I see. So I actually -- why don't  
17 you introduce the representatives of Avista who are here  
18 tonight. It will be a resource for sure.

19 MR. MEYER: Thank you, Chairman Danner and members  
20 of the Commission. I'm David Meyer, and I'm a lawyer  
21 representing the company. And I won't take up too much  
22 time, but I do want to introduce two individuals: Dennis  
23 Vermillion, who is the president of Avista Utilities, and  
24 Jason Thackston, a senior vice-president of the company.  
25 We also have others in attendance here from the company

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1 who directs afterwards. They can visit with you if you  
2 have billing issues or assistance issues, or whatever  
3 your questions are, we'll be around.

4 Thank you very much. Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you, Mr. Meyer.

6 All right. So let me introduce -- first of all, I'm  
7 Dave Danner, chair of the Commission, and with me is  
8 Commissioner Jay Balasbas on my right, and on my left,  
9 Commissioner Ann Rendahl. Before we get started, for  
10 those of you who plan to make public comments tonight, I  
11 will need you to stand and raise your hand and we will  
12 swear you in because that's this kind of proceeding.

13 Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and  
14 nothing but the truth?

15 (All swear affirmatively.)

16 CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right. So let's get started.  
17 We have a number of people signed in tonight. Okay. So  
18 we will start at the top of the list.

19 Margaret Herzog, will you please come forward. Good  
20 evening.

21 MS. HERZOG: I'm Margaret Herzog. I live in  
22 Spokane. I am an Avista customer. In the  
23 Spokesman-Review, as -- where we get our information,  
24 mostly, it was stated that Avista, indeed, wanted a  
25 three-year rate plan, and the reasons given were aging



1 infrastructure and dam renovations. The problem, these  
2 are the same reasons that have been given year after year  
3 after year.

4 A second reason given was online payment system. It  
5 seems to me that this should be a cost efficiency, not a  
6 reason to raise rates. Another reason given in that  
7 article, and this is also in the billing materials that  
8 we get from Avista: federal relicensing. It seems to me  
9 that a company that's well run is well aware when  
10 relicensing will need to occur is an expected cost, and I  
11 think it should be planned and factored into their  
12 regular budget.

13 Perennially, Avista will include in its request  
14 changes their reasoning about the weather or the shifting  
15 cost of gas and electricity as a reason. Yet Avista has  
16 received a power cost rate adjustment which is totally  
17 separate from the rate increase request, and these  
18 surcharges, these power cost rate adjustments, are paid  
19 by ratepayers and are approved in both Washington and  
20 Idaho by the UTC and included in our monthly billing.

21 Avista also asks the customers for donations to  
22 low-income customers' relief. Don't get me wrong, I  
23 think it's a great idea; however, Avista has UTC approval  
24 for LIRAP, L-I-R-A-P, fees included in the monthly bill  
25 to the ratepayers, and this is a low-income rate help for

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1 people who can't pay. So how can customers who  
2 generously contribute, apart from their regular billing,  
3 realize that they have already paid a low-income monthly  
4 relief in their bill?

5 And now to the three-year request. I'm curious, how  
6 can Avista know that the mitigating factors, such as  
7 weather and energy price fluctuation, three years in  
8 advance? Mr. Scott Morrison in a statement said that  
9 Avista tries to keep rates at a 2 percent, but I find  
10 this not factual, and I -- I have a graph here that I'd  
11 like to share with you. I did it in graph form and a  
12 chart form because it's -- if anybody else wants one,  
13 pass it around. It will show you that it has the COLA,  
14 which is cost of living increase. It has -- the red line  
15 is electric and the green line is gas. And the only  
16 reason, by the way, when you look at that chart there's  
17 zeros in 2017, is because UTC denied the requested  
18 increases for insufficient reasons, and I think they  
19 still exist.

20 Washington State merger law requires -- oh, I should  
21 back up a minute here and say, I'm amused that they're  
22 asking for a three-year request when we are also being  
23 told that they will be purchased by Hydro One from  
24 Ontario, Canada mid 2018. That's this coming year and  
25 yet they want a three-year request.

1 Washington State merger law requires that:

2 "Ratepayers" -- this is a quotation -- "need to be  
3 receiving a benefit from the merger to go forward."

4 And every bit of the articles that I read, the  
5 research that I did, affirms that the stockholders will  
6 receive \$53 per share in profit. The information about  
7 ratepayers says that by the year 2020, and this was  
8 mentioned in the introduction, the ratepayers' electric  
9 bills will increase to \$100 a month, natural gas bills to  
10 \$65 a month. And, oddly enough, in my research Hydro One  
11 ratepayers, according to the Fair Hydro Plan announced in  
12 Ontario, will see a 25 percent reduction in their  
13 electric bill by 2020.

14 I have some questions regarding this. Is Hydro One  
15 subject to Washington UTC for future rate change  
16 requests, or are requests only authorized by Ontario  
17 government, which, incidentally, owns -- the Ontario  
18 government owns over half of Hydro One's stocks. Does  
19 Hydro One have governors over Avista's subsidiaries? And  
20 on that paper that I passed out, there's a list of  
21 subsidiaries. It just happened to be in the public  
22 information.

23 To what advantage is this to Avista ratepayers?  
24 Avista lists 17 businesses in which Avista has 85 to 100  
25 percent stockholder control. Were any of the profits of

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1       these companies used to benefit the ratepayer? The  
2       advertising for the merger totes the payment of Avista's  
3       1.9 billion-dollar debt by this merger. But in my  
4       research, do the Avista rate payers then assume the  
5       2.6 billion-dollar debt of Hydro One because we will  
6       become Hydro One?

7               CHAIRMAN DANNER: So I'm going to interrupt you for  
8       just a second. First of all, when you said you have  
9       questions, I want to make sure that you understand all  
10      questions come before us, we will receive them as  
11      rhetorical questions because we're not going to --

12             MS. HERZOG: I understand that.

13             CHAIRMAN DANNER: Those are questions that I would  
14      take up with the company or the Public Counsel. The  
15      Hydro One proceeding is a separate docket that we will be  
16      hearing soon. I will accept this testimony as it relates  
17      to the current case. I just wanted to clarify that.

18             MS. HERZOG: I understand.

19             CHAIRMAN DANNER: We're not about to make any  
20      decisions regarding that proceeding.

21             MS. HERZOG: Thank you. Since Hydro One -- this  
22      is another question -- is a foreign entity, because we  
23      are customers will they obligate U.S. customers to comply  
24      with Canadian power, electricity, gas regulations? And  
25      they have a 20-year plan and it's pretty stiff. If so,

1       it appears to me that this would be regulations without  
2       representation, very similar to the Tea Party taxation --  
3       I'm talking about the Boston Tea Party taxation without  
4       representation. The merger, if approved, is said to go  
5       into effect mid 2018, that's this coming year.

6       Apparently, the stockholders get to vote on the merger  
7       but there isn't even an advisory vote given to the  
8       ratepayers. It seems to me that the advantage is all  
9       Hydro One and the stock payers. And for the ratepayer,  
10      there's only pillaging and looting.

11           Please deny the three-year rate request, and insofar  
12      as the UTC is involved, please study the real winner in  
13      the Hydro One/Avista sale because I don't think it's the  
14      ratepayer. Thank you very much for listening. I feel  
15      that I represent many, many people that I speak with on  
16      almost a daily basis. They can't be here because they  
17      work, because they're elderly, because they're  
18      handicapped and can't make it. So please give it  
19      consideration. Thank you very much.

20           CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you very much for coming out  
21      this evening. I want to reiterate that we are going to  
22      have a separate hearing with regard to Hydro One. That  
23      will be in the months to come, and there also will be a  
24      public hearing on that proceeding. So thank you.

25           Mack Cain, do you want to speak this morning -- this

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1 evening?

2 MR. CAIN: Good evening, Madam, Chairman and  
3 Commissioner. First, I would like to sincerely thank the  
4 members of the Washington State Utilities and  
5 Transportation Commission and to the members of the  
6 Washington State Attorney General's office for allowing  
7 me to present this short presentation to you this  
8 evening. That is, indeed, an honor for me to do that.

9 I want to make it very clear, and I, as a customer  
10 of Avista, have no complaint of the service provided by  
11 Avista Utilities, nor with their current prices and rate  
12 structure. They provide a very essential service with an  
13 outstanding reliability and dependability history. I  
14 commend each and every one of the employees, nor am I  
15 challenging the capabilities nor the performance of the  
16 current CEO of Avista Utilities.

17 What I do have a problem with is their current  
18 excessive and totally irresponsible wage and compensation  
19 packet for the current chief executive officer. This one  
20 employee was paid 5.5 million in 2014, 3.6 million in  
21 2015, 4.5 million in 2016. And I understand his expected  
22 compensation package of 2017 will exceed \$5 million.  
23 This is not new. Avista has been paying this absurd  
24 amount for many years. I have been told he has an  
25 excellent performance record and has done a wonderful job

1 for Avista. Let us compare this one individual's salary  
2 with another highly responsible position: The President  
3 of the United States of America.

4 Our President receives an annual salary of \$400,000.  
5 Avista pays their CEO more than 13 times the annual  
6 salary of our President of the United States. That bears  
7 repeating. Avista pays one employee, their CEO, more  
8 than 13 times the salary of the President of the United  
9 States.

10 Now, let us compare the responsibilities of those  
11 two senior executives. Our President is responsible for  
12 the international relations and trade agreements with 218  
13 nations. Our national securities, the economic  
14 stability, the health and welfare, the transportation,  
15 the education, the infrastructure, the defense, the  
16 deployment and overall well-being of almost 400 million  
17 citizens. That is 400 million. The CEO of Avista is  
18 responsible for the daily operations of about 1,500  
19 employees. A reasonable and just compensation package  
20 for Avista CEO should be in the range of \$300,000,  
21 certainly not \$5.5 million annually.

22 On the 26th of May 2016, Avista requested a power  
23 cost rate adjustment from the Washington Utilities and  
24 Transportation Commission, an increase of between 2.97  
25 percent and 3.1 percent, which was expected to provide

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1 approximately \$15 million per year in additional revenue  
2 and wants to begin September 1st of 2017. Every one of  
3 Avista's 770,000 customers would have then paid that  
4 increase, yet Avista's compensation plan was to give the  
5 equivalent -- that is one-third of the expected increase,  
6 5.5 million -- one-third to one individual that is borne  
7 by 770,000 customers. That request was not approved  
8 thanks to the Washington State Utilities and  
9 Transportation Commission.

10 Now, as the Honorable Chairman, Mr. Danner,  
11 explained to us a few minutes ago, the new, current rate  
12 which was filed on 13th of May, 2017 -- and it's a new  
13 request by Avista to include those additional rate  
14 increases for both gasoline, or natural gas and  
15 electricity to be limit -- beginning 2018, 1st of May,  
16 2018, and the 1st of May, 2019, and 1st of May in 2020.  
17 Now, for those individuals that are not familiar, this is  
18 not just one year, this is the continuing on, so the rate  
19 increase for 2018 continues on into the future and an  
20 additional rate increase of 2019 and an additional rate  
21 increase for 2020.

22 On the 13th of May, 2017, I mailed a letter to the  
23 four current members of the Avista Utilities compensation  
24 and organization committee. That is the managing group  
25 that determines the salary paid to the CEO. I asked that



1 committee for a copy of the job description and to  
2 explain the extreme and unique skills and capability  
3 required of Avista. That would justify such an obscene  
4 and the extremely inflated annual compensation. The  
5 external communications manager responded that Avista  
6 selects and retains an independent compensation  
7 consultant, that is an individual separate from the  
8 company itself to support the oversight of Avista's  
9 executive compensation programs. That manager said to me  
10 that Avista pays some customers -- some outsider to  
11 determine the pay and compensation for their executives  
12 with little or no regard to the hardships imposed on  
13 their 770,000 customers.

14 Now, I'm sure that Avista will respond with a  
15 statement that their CEO is not paid with revenue  
16 received from their 770,000 customers who they are  
17 leveraging additional rate increases onto. They will  
18 probably justify with a statement that their CEO was paid  
19 from investors, or investors of Avista stock who have  
20 purchased Avista stock. Avista depends upon investors  
21 for proper funding, the funding that's needed for  
22 computer service shows, transformers, giant switching  
23 devices, poles, towers, thousands of miles of  
24 high-voltage lines, personnel wages, insurance, medical  
25 and thousands of other items necessary to provide the

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1 excellent service that Avista is famous for.

2 Our local newspaper, the Spokesman-Review reported  
3 on Thursday, 11 May of 2017, a return on investment of  
4 Avista Utilities for the past 365 days, that is one year,  
5 to be 3 percent. So what does this mean when we say  
6 return on investment by Avista's -- Avista stock of 3  
7 percent? It means that Avista is paying their CEO the  
8 equivalent of about what 10,000 investors would be  
9 investing if each individual invested an -- approximately  
10 \$18,000 for one year and return of 3 percent, the total  
11 of all those 10,000 investors, it would take 10,000 to  
12 equal the salary of one employee of Avista Utilities.

13 Let me break down for you the results of that  
14 unreasonable annual compensation packet of 5.5. Assuming  
15 that the CEO receives a two-week vacation annually, he  
16 works 50 weeks per year, five workdays per week, that's  
17 250 workdays per year. When we divide the annual salary  
18 by the annual workdays, we will see that Avista Utilities  
19 pays their CEO \$22,000 per day. I will say that one more  
20 time. One man working eight hours receives \$22,000.

21 Now, I would like you to consider this. I believe  
22 that at least one third of those 770,000 customers of  
23 Avista most likely receives not more than the \$22,000  
24 that their CEO receives in one day. They work a full  
25 year, striving and trying to keep their house warm, and

1 buy groceries and milk for the baby, et cetera. They  
2 work a full year, probably not much more than what the  
3 CEO receives in one day.

4 Now, it gets even more interesting.

5 CHAIRMAN DANNER: So we're going to have to wrap  
6 this up.

7 MR. CAIN: I have two more paragraphs in all  
8 respect. What about his hourly wage? If he's making  
9 \$22,000 per day, this will be shocking to you. Avista  
10 pays its CEO \$2,750 per hour, one hour's work, \$2,750.

11 Once again, Avista pays their CEO \$2,750 per hour.  
12 Members of the Utilities and Transportation Commission,  
13 does that sound fair to you? Does that really sound fair  
14 to you, one man receiving \$2,750 salary? When many of  
15 the 770,000 customers are striving, cutting the heat back  
16 at night, trying to keep their house warm and buy food.  
17 I beg you to disapprove those additional annual rate  
18 increases proposed for 2018, 2019 and 2020 until Avista  
19 Utilities gets their compensation schedules for all of  
20 their executives under control. If Avista can afford to  
21 pay one employee \$5.5 million annually, they certainly do  
22 not need a rate increase to be borne from each of their  
23 770,000 customers.

24 And to the board of directors of Avista, it is hard  
25 for me to understand that you would pay some consultant

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1 from an outside firm to advise you to pay one individual  
2 \$2,750 per hour, and even more difficult for me to  
3 believe that you would agree that it's insanity when you  
4 can easily obtain a highly qualified, experienced,  
5 dedicated professional CEO to perform your required  
6 duties for a compensation package of about \$150 per hour  
7 or \$300,000 annual salary.

8 If anyone would like to have a copy of this  
9 presentation, please see me again. Honorable members of  
10 the Washington Commission and Attorney General's office,  
11 I thank you for the opportunity of speaking before you  
12 tonight.

13 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you. If you look to our  
14 court reporter -- or to Mr. Roberts.

15 All right. Julie HoneKamp, would you step forward?

16 MS. HONEKAMP: Good evening, Chairman Danner,  
17 Commissioner Rendahl and Commissioner Balasbas. My name  
18 is Julie HoneKamp, and I serve as the CEO at the Spokane  
19 Neighborhood Action Partners, better known as SNAP.

20 For over 50 years, SNAP has served as the Spokane  
21 area community action agency and the primary nonprofit  
22 energy assistance provider of Spokane County.

23 In 2016, SNAP served over 47,000 unduplicated  
24 low-income individuals through nearly 30 programs aimed  
25 at either stabilizing low-income households or equipping

1 (inaudible) of poverty. In a subset of our work, in  
2 2016, SNAP provided energy assistance to the 23,607  
3 low-income households which is a duplicated number, and  
4 that was through a mix of public private and ratepayer  
5 dollars, a fairly substantial increase over 2015. My  
6 hope today is to update you on several collaborative and  
7 innovative efforts to share some thought about the  
8 multi-year rate increase and also to close with an  
9 expression of gratitude.

10 So this past heating season, which for us is October  
11 of 2016 to September of 2017, is very busy, and our  
12 energy assistance programs continue to evolve and change  
13 every year. I'm grateful to the SNAP team, they have  
14 really pushed hard in the couple of years to try and find  
15 new ways to engage customers and grow the number of  
16 people that we serve. In an effort to continually  
17 improve our effectiveness and efficiency, we work with  
18 Avista and multiple partners to do five primary things  
19 this last year season.

20 So the first of which was to successfully complete  
21 Avista's annual walk-in day where together in just one  
22 day, we served 670 households with energy assistance.  
23 This appointment day -- or this actual service day was  
24 held before we opened our appointment line, which just  
25 happened about two weeks ago, and we made close to 6,000

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1 appointments for energy assistance in just over eight  
2 days, so the need remains strong.

3 Secondly, we shifted to running LIRAP year-round.  
4 We used to just run LIRAP for a good portion of the year  
5 and in the summer take a break. We now run it  
6 year-round.

7 Thirdly, we continue to expand outreach. So to  
8 mental health care workers, to affordable apartment  
9 complexes, working with the homeless coalition, working  
10 with ALTC, our aging and long-term partners, to help  
11 spread the news about this important resource.

12 Number four, you have been planning on holding  
13 conservation education classes in September before energy  
14 even starts, and that helps clients get an early kind of  
15 access to energy appointments, so we're always trying to  
16 educate, along with getting assistance.

17 Then, lastly, and you may well know, several years  
18 back you endorsed the effort to run a new pilot for  
19 low-income and senior rate customers, disabled customers  
20 on fixed income, and we were able to serve an additional  
21 800 customers in Spokane, Stevens, Lincoln and Ferry  
22 County. A third-party evaluator, Evergreen Economics,  
23 shared that on average participating electric customers  
24 decreased their annual electricity bill by 26 percent, or  
25 \$309 less than their pre-pilot cost. And for natural

1 gas, they saved only \$354 a year or reduced 38 percent of  
2 their cost for their pre-pilot natural gas cost. So that  
3 pilot also opened up a new avenue for us to serve  
4 disabled households in a little higher income range.  
5 Very effective pilot.

6 In addition to working with more resources and  
7 Avista, SNAP has also come together to work on a new  
8 pilot that will hopefully launch in fall of 2018, the  
9 percentage of income payment plan and our arrearage  
10 management plan pilot that are also scheduled to get  
11 running.

12 These continued service delivery improvements and  
13 innovation efforts highlight the strength of our  
14 partnership, and their willingness, the company's  
15 willingness to explore new service delivery methods, so  
16 there's much to be grateful for, but I do remain  
17 concerned about the impact of the proposed multi-year  
18 increase.

19 So according to the Spokane community indicator  
20 website which is maintained by Eastern Washington  
21 University, 63,000 households -- I'm sorry -- residents  
22 live below the federal poverty line in Spokane County.  
23 So that's 13.2 percent of our community lives below the  
24 poverty line. That compares to Washington State where  
25 11.3 percent of the total population live below the

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1 federal poverty line.

2           Additionally, the median household income in Spokane  
3 County was \$53,000 a year in 2016 versus \$67,000 a year  
4 for Washington State as a whole. The vast majority of  
5 SNAP's clients earn less than \$12,000 a year. With  
6 income increases in the single digits, it's difficult to  
7 accommodate a proposed electric increase for the initial  
8 year of 12 percent for electric and 5.4 percent for gas.  
9 While wealthy in community spirit, Spokane lags  
10 economically behind any of our west side colleagues, and  
11 our low-income customers obviously face difficult choices  
12 about how to stretch already limited resources.

13           And while I can appreciate the need to maintain a  
14 strong structure and liability, I really do urge you to  
15 maintain a low monthly fixed charge. Fixed charges are  
16 not something low-income households can conserve their  
17 way out of, they can't cut their bill for that fixed  
18 charge.

19           So I want to close by expressing gratitude. There's  
20 not enough good news in this world. So gratitude to you  
21 all for approving a multi-year funding plan a number of  
22 years ago. That has allowed us to stay focused on the  
23 innovation and service delivery instead of planning a  
24 resource avenue. It's created great stability, so thank  
25 you for that multi-year funding plan for LIRAP.



1           And while SNAP's mission and Avista's may be  
2           different, they are very complementary, and we both share  
3           joint vision for a robust, healthy community. And I do  
4           have to say, as much as moments like this present an  
5           opportunity to sometimes disagree, I do appreciate their  
6           partnership and their willingness to come forward and  
7           keep working and innovating to serve our community.

8           So, lastly, thank you for being here and coming to  
9           the community center and for striving to set fair, just,  
10          reasonable and sufficient rates. Thank you.

11          CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right. Thank you very much.  
12          Yolanda Lovato.

13          MS. LOVATO: Good evening. I'm Yolanda Lovato. I'm  
14          the planning and resource rep in the Aging and Long-Term  
15          Care of Eastern Washington, and we are here to represent  
16          the older adults and people living with disabilities  
17          living in Spokane, Ferry, Pend Oreille, Stevens and  
18          Whitman County. We are an agency that touches a lot of  
19          them, about approximately 40,000 people in our service  
20          area, and we a representative council that is composed of  
21          volunteers who live in our communities. This committee  
22          is called our Planning and Management Council, and I'm  
23          here to speak on behalf of the council as we bring forth  
24          some concerns that the council has identified.

25          The Planning and Management Council believe that

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1 given the general rate increase, settlement increases  
2 granted to Avista for electric and gas nearly annually  
3 since 2006, and with looming budget cuts and cuts to  
4 social services, that we should see no electrical and  
5 natural gas increases granted. As the Commission  
6 considers the Avista general rate increase, we ask you to  
7 consider the following:

8 Washington's 2016 elder, economic and security rate,  
9 that is the percent of older retired seniors living in  
10 their own home whose incomes fall below the local elder,  
11 economics and security index. This information you're  
12 asking about, 48 percent of older adults are living alone  
13 and lack incomes that they will need to meet their needs  
14 as they age and remain living in their own homes.

15 Secondly, the state's economic and security rate for  
16 senior couples is about 23 percent. This rate stands in  
17 contrast to the modest 4.2 poverty rate for senior  
18 couples. So we see a huge disparity in older adults who  
19 are living in poverty and older adults who are having  
20 difficult with income security. These older adults are  
21 more likely to go without one or more basic needs and are  
22 less likely to weather unforeseen expenses.

23 Income for older adults in our region does not keep  
24 pace with rate increases. Many elderly adults in our  
25 area rely on social security alone, and we have only seen

1 a .3 percent increase in social security, and any rate  
2 increase is offset by the lack of increases in social  
3 security.

4 We know that many of the clients that we work with  
5 are low income and must manage both chronic health  
6 conditions and other problems and/or live with  
7 disabilities and sometimes both. We know that an  
8 increase in residential rates for heat and light impacts  
9 this populace in a way that doesn't impact other  
10 populations, and we know that these kinds of decisions  
11 have an impact on whether people choose to fill  
12 prescriptions or meet their heating needs. So we'd ask  
13 you to consider this population as we look at this  
14 request and that we really look at the impact it will  
15 have, not in only 2018, but in 2019 and 2020 as this age  
16 demographic continues to emerge.

17 Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you very much. We  
19 appreciate you coming out tonight.

20 Okay. Kathy LeTellier?

21 MS. LE TELLIER: I'm going to pass because she  
22 expressed my concerns.

23 CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right. Thank you very much.  
24 Brad Sauer?

25 MR. SAUER: Good evening, Commissioners. My name is

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1 Brad Sauer. I'm a rancher in Rosebud County. Of course,  
2 I'm here for Montana and Colstrip, Montana. I'm here to  
3 provide comment on your rate case as it regards to in  
4 Colstrip, Montana power plants, which provide a  
5 significant amount of power for your state and of which  
6 Avista is a part owner. I would also add that our state  
7 attorney general has stated that this area is a potential  
8 Superfund site. Given that the nature and extent of  
9 problems are still being determined as noted in their  
10 Colstrip wastewater facility closure plan from our  
11 Montana DQ in 2017, I ask you, the Washington UTC, to  
12 require Avista to set aside funds to address future  
13 problems at the Colstrip site, particularly as these  
14 plants face change.

15 An example of a problem as per the Montana  
16 Department of Environmental Quality in their  
17 administrative order of consent, which was begun in 2010,  
18 states that contaminated water from the coal ash settling  
19 ponds has leaked into the adjacent groundwaters, the  
20 aquifers and the extent of that contamination in that  
21 document is noted to be one mile downgrading from the  
22 existing ash ponds. These contaminated waters contain  
23 heavy metals. The amount of water noted to be leaking in  
24 that document is approximately 280 gallons per minute,  
25 which translates to 400,000 gallons per day. As it leaks

1 out of the ponds, it's monitored by shallow wells which,  
2 when they become contaminated, are turned into pump-back  
3 wells and new monitoring wells are then drilled below  
4 them in the gradient.

5 As of tonight the number of these wells is  
6 approaching approximately 1,000, and the cost of these  
7 wells, the drilling of them and the operation of them and  
8 the sampling of them is currently being passed on to your  
9 ratepayers. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you very much. I can't read  
11 your handwriting. Looks like it's Bob Henlin. Is that  
12 right?

13 MR. HERITAGE: I'm here. I live on Chattaroy in  
14 Chattaroy.

15 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Yeah. How do you spell your last  
16 name, please?

17 MR. HERITAGE: Heritage.

18 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Heritage. All right. Thank you,  
19 sir. Go ahead.

20 MR. HERITAGE: The rates that they're trying to  
21 force through with you people, how many meals for the  
22 seniors that live on social security -- we only get --  
23 I'm 81 years old. I have a 1 percent raise in my social  
24 security. That doesn't buy anything. They want ten.  
25 You add them both together, it's atrocious as far as I'm

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1 concerned. I'm having a hell of a time trying to pay my  
2 electric and gas bill as it is. He sits in a house and  
3 he doesn't really care about it, so long as he gets his  
4 overpaid check that shouldn't be here.

5 So there is one other thing here. I have a second  
6 meter on my garage, and they tell me that the meter is  
7 considered to be a commercial meter because it's a second  
8 meter on the property. And I'm paying \$18 a month for  
9 that one, one on the house and one on the gas meter.  
10 That's one heck of a lot of money. And I just don't  
11 understand why a meter on a garage should be considered a  
12 commercial meter, and I pay more for that electricity in  
13 that. I'm going to have it cut off is what I'm going to  
14 do, but they just -- they're greedy is all I can say.  
15 And I wish that he would go find a hole to -- crawl in  
16 it -- crawl in it.

17 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you, sir.

18 MR. HERITAGE: You're welcome.

19 CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right. Bill Gillis, come  
20 forward. Good evening, Mr. Gillis.

21 MR. GILLIS: Good evening. Commissioners, I  
22 appreciate you coming to Spokane. I thought since you  
23 made the trip, I want to try to say something useful. I  
24 don't know if I will succeed or not, and I'm definitely a  
25 newby on this side of the microphone. They haven't

1 really talked about it in every case, but a couple of  
2 reasons why this particular one interests me -- but I was  
3 going to say that my neighbors that spoke before me, I'm  
4 pretty impressed with the level of detail into the target  
5 resource systems. I mean, as somebody who is just a  
6 shareholder or customer, it's complex stuff. That's  
7 partly why they -- I don't know if I would say a whole  
8 lot, just general resource.

9 But I think this particular rate gives me -- one of  
10 things I did want to say for the record is that I don't  
11 think it's an important area of the recent rate case  
12 because of the framing context that we're in right now,  
13 one being the real possibility that you'll be looking at  
14 a merger this spring, and the second is just kind of  
15 broad trends of the industry to the technology change,  
16 the shift of generation, the net zero movement, the  
17 limited customer interest in choice.

18 All these things are changing the industry, and I  
19 don't think you can separate all that from what you're  
20 doing here in the rate case. But at the same time, I  
21 know you've got to make a decision and have a  
22 responsibility to respond to the company's petition and  
23 find new ways. You can't solve it all, but I think  
24 that -- what I want to say for the record is I think the  
25 context is important for you to consider as you work

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1 through this -- these new decisions.

2 Specifically with respect to the reality that you  
3 may be considering a merger this coming year is that,  
4 one, it's really important you get this right because  
5 you're talking about the rate structure that's going to  
6 be used in -- by the newly formed company in the merge  
7 situation. And having the right baseline is important,  
8 so if -- partly, it means taking your time to get it  
9 right. If the company has a strong case, they really  
10 would be harmed if you don't raise rates right away,  
11 then, yeah, you got to do that.

12 The point was made earlier that three years is a  
13 long time, and I agree. I mean, I don't know if you have  
14 another option, but if there's a way that you can -- if  
15 you have to provide a remedy quickly, to do it for a  
16 shorter time frame, I think it kind of makes sense given  
17 the context is something to consider. Again, I don't  
18 have the big picture. It's just kind of rough thoughts.

19 The other thing, I spent a little time just skimming  
20 some of the testimony last night, and the only thing that  
21 jumped out at me and surprised me is that -- I think it  
22 was one of your staff, Hancock, I think -- is that  
23 right -- he had mentioned that there was a statement in  
24 there that prudence review is being kicked down the road  
25 for three years, and, you know, I was a little surprised,



1 and that there may be a lot of reasons for that. I mean,  
2 I just skimmed stuff.

3 But it's something that -- particularly again in the  
4 context of moving into a newly -- newly formed company  
5 with new structure strikes me as -- kind of do  
6 you really -- do you need that information? Is that an  
7 important piece of information to consider when you are  
8 faced with a challenge of figuring out if this is a  
9 benefit to the customers? And if it's not a part of this  
10 rate case, the merger may be completed kind of thing. So  
11 it's something that -- again, I don't know what the whole  
12 context is, but it's something that just jumped out to me  
13 and said -- as a customer, you know, I really think that  
14 that's something that maybe you should consider given,  
15 this rate increase.

16 I guess the other reason for that is that you heard  
17 quite a bit of testimony about the Colstrip in the prior  
18 proceedings this afternoon. And Colstrip, historically,  
19 has been one where our prudence has been a major concern,  
20 and I think it's a concern to a lot of us in Spokane. So  
21 if you have an option, that's one that I would advocate  
22 to consider as part of this rate increase case.

23 The other big picture, the backward changes that are  
24 moving towards consumer choices in generation. I mean,  
25 it's just fascinating, it really is. It makes your job

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1 so hard, and at the same time, I think it impacts this  
2 rate case, but at the same time I don't know what you'd  
3 do about that. I mean, I don't have a lot of answers,  
4 but I do have, I guess some thoughts, I mean, as I look  
5 at it, but the combination of the battery storage  
6 technologies, shift of generation.

7 And you're hearing from customers in the Avista area  
8 saying, yeah, I would love to go choose my generation. I  
9 don't want to buy those. And so that there's a movement,  
10 I think, that there's a real possibility that competition  
11 is coming our way in the -- at least in the generation  
12 choice. And how does that affect the rate case? Well,  
13 in a couple of ways.

14 One is it reminds me a lot of the telecommunications  
15 industry in the '90s. It has the same feel to it kind  
16 of. It is that -- well, we're looking at with -- when  
17 companies, a monopoly of the companies are faced with the  
18 prospect of the competition, a couple of reactions you're  
19 going to see from them is called telecom. It's one thing  
20 of looking at the merger opportunities. If you have  
21 legacy assets, in this case it's generation that is  
22 threatened by the competition, then you are going to want  
23 more cap to your customers to spread it obviously because  
24 the competition cares how you do it. And that's  
25 happening both with -- both -- that regulate companies in

1 Washington.

2 And then the other thing that happened in telecom,  
3 and I think that this does apply to the rate case, is  
4 that a well-managed company that is responsible to their  
5 shareholders is going to be looking for ways to  
6 front-load the costs to the legacy assets. So as your  
7 staff does their evaluation and you ask your questions  
8 and so forth, I think that's -- I don't have the answer  
9 as to how you do it, like, how you operationalize that,  
10 but as an economist and somebody who's sat on telecom  
11 proceedings, I know what happens.

12 I think when you look under the hood, it's probably  
13 somewhere in the cost of -- cost of capital, there's  
14 problems with negotiation structures, but it's way beyond  
15 my pay grade to figure it out, but you have the staff  
16 that do those things. You have the opportunity to ask  
17 questions of the stakeholders, and that's one thing I  
18 think that's really important because it's just -- it's  
19 part of this context that we're in right now.

20 And I understand -- I mean, just per your website,  
21 that you've other dockets going on that focus on the  
22 issues, but as a Avista ratepayer and me and my neighbors  
23 are paying these costs, so it's important you look at --  
24 and it kind of goes back to is there a way of taking your  
25 time -- I don't know -- but if not, these are coming down

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1 the road. So those are some, I guess for the high-level  
2 observations, I don't have kind of the details some of my  
3 neighbors had.

4 There's three kind of things that, I guess, jump out  
5 at me, like, you know, to suggest maybe you can consider  
6 in your -- in your -- in this case. One -- without  
7 trying to solve all the problems at once, I guess, one  
8 is I think the principles that you state in your response  
9 to the company in this rate case are important. I don't  
10 know that you've always got the principles in order, but  
11 I think in this case you should.

12 And one really important principle I think to state  
13 very clearly is that the company bears the responsibility  
14 for the risk of legacy assets. There's a more eloquent  
15 way of saying that, but beyond -- it's looking -- we're  
16 looking here at a situation where there's legacy assets  
17 where the potential of competition can change the value  
18 of those, and we as rate payers should not be paying  
19 them. That's really kind of -- in other words, that's  
20 something that if the company purchases assets, it's  
21 theirs to manage, and I think it's really important that  
22 the Commission take the position -- the principal  
23 position that as it receives and more information becomes  
24 available, that these costs are the responsibility of the  
25 company and not members of the public.

1           The other is -- that I mentioned before is that if  
2           there's a way to include purchasing agent review as a  
3           part of this rate case, I think the context deserves it.  
4           I also think that the public testimony you receive from  
5           people concerned about the Colstrip deserves that. So  
6           that's something I guess I recommend that you consider.

7           And third thing I'd recommend is just the timeline.  
8           Three years seems like a long time to me. I mean, I  
9           totally understand the efficiency of traditional --  
10          not -- the regulatory planning involved and all this  
11          stuff, but because of the context of a merger coming up,  
12          new faces, new culture, all these things, I think three  
13          years is too long. And -- I mean, my first preference  
14          would be to just take more time and really work this  
15          through, but I don't know how that really works, but if  
16          the company can prove damages, they don't get this relief  
17          in January, then I guess that's the way it is. If they  
18          can prove damages, I think more time is good. But the  
19          alternative, I think, is just shorten the length of the  
20          remedy and come back to it. Those are my thoughts, for  
21          what it's worth.

22           CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you very much for coming out  
23           tonight.

24           Antoine Velone, are you here?

25           MR. VELONE: My name is Antoine Velone, and I am a

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1 concerned citizen. And maybe what I've listened to and  
2 I've talked to my people, you know, among my peers, that  
3 maybe we should be a little bit more considerate, I mean,  
4 in making decisions on raising rates on, you know,  
5 utilities. You know, like, a lot of people are on social  
6 security, you know. I mean, you know, and you look at  
7 the jobs, I mean, who do you blame for minimum wages?  
8 Who do you blame for the minimum wage paying jobs in  
9 Spokane. You know, like with coal, we should be looking  
10 at where you can save energy, you know. And it seems  
11 like we're all looking at the stockholders and investors  
12 and who is going to make money instead of looking at the  
13 people and the public as a community, you know, the  
14 corporation, you know, for people to survive. You know,  
15 and if you don't have a paying job, then what happens,  
16 you know.

17 I mean, you can get somebody, and then somebody at  
18 the same time is -- the CEO, for example, like this  
19 gentleman said, is sitting up there with his paid account  
20 and he has nothing to worry about. You know, I'm pretty  
21 sure he can take a cut in pay, you know. I mean, to work  
22 with us, to work with the people, to work with everybody  
23 so we can be a strong community all together. Maybe next  
24 time you do, just be considerate, or if you make an  
25 agreement with any kind of company that's transporting

1 coal to Spokane and whoever that is going to be, like,  
2 oil, let them foot the bill if there are going to be any  
3 spills, not the taxpayers.

4 I mean, we don't have enough money to begin with. I  
5 mean, the taxpayers, you know, a lot of them are working  
6 on minimum wage. I mean, I just like -- I just want to  
7 say that, to be a little bit more considerate, okay?  
8 Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you very much.

10 Rebecca MacMullan.

11 MS. MAC MULLAN: Hello. Thank you for coming to  
12 Spokane and giving us an opportunity to comment on  
13 Avista's rate increases. I'm an Avista rate payer and I  
14 am deeply concerned about climate change. I'm concerned  
15 what anthropogenic climate change will bring to political  
16 instability, dangerous weather patterns and shortages of  
17 food and clean water. So I'm here to ask that any  
18 increases in our electricity rates be traded for a  
19 concrete commitment from Avista to end coal-by-wire by  
20 2025.

21 Two months ago in Spokane, we suffered several days  
22 of hazardous and fairly hazardous air quality due to  
23 gargantuan wildfires in British Columbia, Montana and  
24 Oregon. So for people with respiratory conditions, there  
25 was literally nowhere to run. And at the same time, I

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1 was trying to protect my kids from the highest level of  
2 air pollution recorded in this county. My father was  
3 under mandatory evacuation orders in Florida from  
4 Hurricane Irma. And even that concern was soon dwarfed  
5 by Hurricane Maria.

6 Now, my husband grew up in Santorsa, Puerto Rico.  
7 And Puerto Ricans, they deal with the occasional  
8 hurricanes the same way we deal with wind storms or ice  
9 storms. I mean, they're dangerous and destructive, but  
10 we batten down the hatches and get through it, but Maria  
11 was a completely different beast.

12 There are places in Puerto Rico still -- 20 percent  
13 of the island doesn't have clean water. So in 2017,  
14 cholera is a serious public health threat in the  
15 United -- in U.S. soil for U.S. citizens. That's  
16 unbelievable. And that horror continued. That's -- 42  
17 people died in raging wildfires in California. These are  
18 signs of dire trouble ahead and it's long past time that  
19 we change our course. We've understood the heat-trapping  
20 properties of carbon dioxide gases before the Civil War,  
21 but since 1970s, scientists have expressed concern that  
22 human emissions of such greenhouse gases could destruct  
23 the ecological balance of the planet. But it is in this  
24 decade that we have incontrovertible proof about the  
25 neurological anthropogenic climate change, and in this



1 decade, we must reverse it.

2 We're speeding like Thelma and Louise at the edge of  
3 the cliff, and that cliff and runaway climate change and  
4 the positive feedback view of unstoppable warming that  
5 will be fed by diluted -- pools that are diluted of  
6 reflective ice and snow, by methane released from falling  
7 permafrost and from deep disruption in global air and  
8 water circulation. So if we don't hit the brakes hard  
9 now, we will take away the privileges of security,  
10 prosperity, health and stability from generations to  
11 come.

12 When I saw the rate increase from Avista for next  
13 year, I thought it was a typo. Surely they meant 2.6 and  
14 not 12.6. To ask for a such a steep increase without  
15 making a concrete commitment to reducing the lines on  
16 fossil fuels is emblematic of the abhorous and hubris  
17 that has already pushed our biosphere to the brink.

18 Now, personally, I've already traded the kitchen  
19 remodel that I really want for 30 made-in-Washington  
20 solar panels that I believe in. So I'm willing to pay  
21 the price for a sustainable future, but I'm not willing  
22 to pay for outdated harmful coal, fire and electricity,  
23 and I shouldn't have to pay for an aging coal plant,  
24 legacy asset that will need millions of dollars in  
25 updates just to meet federal and state requirements.

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1 Washington State is to leave fossil fuels in the  
2 ground and lead the way to a clean and prosperous future.  
3 So please use your authority to insist that coal, fire  
4 and power be eliminated from our power supply.

5 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you very much.

6 Stephen Chanter, are you here?

7 MR. CHANTER: Good evening. I would like to thank  
8 you for the opportunity to speak. I've been listening.  
9 Avista wants \$89.8 million in the next three years. Like  
10 her, I was also surprised when I saw the flier. Then I  
11 got -- sitting down and got to thinking about it. I said  
12 to myself, well, wait a minute. Hold on. Avista is a  
13 publicly traded stock on the stock exchange. As a  
14 publicly traded stock, it is believed that its revenues  
15 or capital from that stock is what's used to purchase  
16 replacement and/or upgrades, equipment, thereby giving  
17 the shareholders a larger sum of return in the form of  
18 larger dividends in the future. That's, basically, how  
19 stock works. This also tends to drive the stock up in  
20 price as well.

21 Now, as of January 25th of this year, Avista stock  
22 closed at \$39.18. As of November 1st of this year,  
23 Avista stock closed at \$52.24. That means the stock  
24 increased itself \$13.06 in just nine months. That's a  
25 3.33 percent increase just for the stock. Okay. I'm not

1 even going to go to the dividends.

2 One thing I do have a problem with and maybe they  
3 can clarify to me, I was recently reading in Idaho,  
4 Avista asked for a 7.09 percent increase for 2018 and a  
5 4.2 percent in 2019 with a 25 cent increase for the  
6 monthly service, bringing the minimum service up to \$6  
7 for basic charge.

8 The Idaho Public Utilities Commission just settled  
9 the first of this month with Avista. They didn't get it.  
10 They got a 5.6 increase for 2018 and a 2.3 for 2019, but  
11 they did get their 25 cents increase for the monthly  
12 service charge, which brings it up to \$6 for a basic  
13 charge. The reason I'm stating those numbers is because  
14 of this:

15 Avista has asked for 12 percent for us in Washington  
16 in 2018, 2.4 percent in 2019 and 2.5 in 2020, with a  
17 dollar 50 increase for basic service up to \$10 for the  
18 state of Washington. My question is: Why is Washington  
19 State being asked to pay 12 percent increase when Avista  
20 only asked Idaho to pay 7.9 in their asking? Why was  
21 Avista asking Washington payers to pay a higher basic  
22 surcharge than Idaho? We currently pay \$8.50. Idaho  
23 pays \$5.75.

24 Okay. Now, according to the Avista fliers,  
25 residential customers using only 938 kilowatts per month,

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1 as you said, would increase \$10.63 or 12.6 percent more  
2 per month, increasing their bill to \$95.14. Understand,  
3 Avista is asking not for what we have but for  
4 \$89.8 million more from their customers. Also because of  
5 Idaho -- and maybe they will explain it to me -- to me  
6 it's the same company. Yes, it does cross state lines.  
7 Well, I understand it crosses Montana and Oregon, too.  
8 Avista's asking an increase difference for aging  
9 infrastructure, but once again, it's the same company.

10 If I was to buy stock, I don't say I want stock in  
11 Washington Avista or Idaho Avista. It's Avista. So  
12 there shouldn't be such a disparity in rate increases.  
13 It's one company. I'm sure the company buys its parts  
14 for all the different states from the same companies they  
15 do business with, I'm sure. And I'm sure they pay the  
16 same basic rates to their employees seeing how we're only  
17 40 miles from Idaho.

18 So I'm asking, why is Avista asking Washington, for  
19 us to pay almost 30 percent more? Hopefully, you folks  
20 sitting there come to an agreement with Avista on a much  
21 lower rate. I'm hoping.

22 But then to make matters more confusing, in today's  
23 paper, there's an article Avista is going to be purchased  
24 by a Canadian company -- they mentioned it before --  
25 Hydro One. Hydro One plans on buying Avista to the tune

1 of \$5.3 billion, and they expect to close it next August,  
2 according to the paper. The Avista board of directors  
3 will retain a fair amount of the local autonomy, and it  
4 will be a wholly owned subsidiary.

5 Hydro One says that it will give a credit rate worth  
6 \$31 million over the next ten years. This was proposed  
7 by Avista in order to make the deal go through, which  
8 means residential customers will receive about \$4.32  
9 credit each year.

10 Now, in their flier, they said the increase was  
11 10.63 -- \$10.63. We're going to get a \$4.32 credit to  
12 subset the balance. Okay.

13 Just a little bit more, and I'll let you all go. I  
14 was there at one of these meetings about four and a half  
15 years ago when Avista wanted an increase. It seems like  
16 they want one of those almost every year. Normally I  
17 forego them, but like that young lady, when I opened my  
18 bill and saw -- I thought it was a typo, too. No, it  
19 wasn't.

20 Anyway, four and a half years ago I came, and I  
21 think I met you and talked with you the last time. It  
22 was then that they had given -- I mentioned that --  
23 they had mentioned they had given \$3,500 to two minor  
24 political primary state candidates running in Idaho  
25 through PAC committees. I was able to find out what was

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1 given in the gubernatorial races, senate races and  
2 house -- or even presidential candidates of their choice  
3 for the northwest. But if they can feel that they can  
4 give money to PAC committees in such large amounts,  
5 because this was a minor preliminary primary, then I feel  
6 any political donations made by this company and passed  
7 on, even knowingly or unknowingly to Avista customers due  
8 to rate increases -- this should be an area the  
9 Commission might want to look into to see what's going  
10 on. I don't know. I don't have complete control of  
11 their budget, even though I am a retired accountant.

12 But understand, Avista has a duty to perform, and  
13 they do it very well, with the growing energy needs, they  
14 do promote energy efficiency. I agree with that. I know  
15 that they string new lines and subdivisions into new  
16 homes and new businesses all the time, okay. However,  
17 they get paid when they string into those subdivisions,  
18 those houses and those businesses, when they do that.  
19 Okay. So that's -- that's a wash.

20 I've gone -- me, personally, for example, I've gone  
21 to great pains to make my home more efficient. In the  
22 last three years of caring for my children, I've replaced  
23 all the windows in my home with new efficiency ones,  
24 added more insulation in the roof, 4 inches, replaced my  
25 aging heating system and added a heat pump. But with

1 rate increases, I haven't seen a reduction in my little  
2 2,300 square foot home in my electric bill for my wife  
3 and I. Go figure. I don't know why. Okay.

4 As far as people go, I wanted to give you this  
5 personal bit. I'm a volunteer tax aid coordinator for  
6 the city of Medical Lake. The tax aid is part of the  
7 AARP program that works closely with the IRS to help  
8 people file their personal income taxes for free, usually  
9 dealing with lower and middle income families. I have  
10 been offering my free services to give help to the public  
11 for their personal income tax for 20 years. Most are  
12 seniors. Most are on fixed incomes. Most make between  
13 15 to 29,000 a year, period.

14 Society leaves an aging community that must make a  
15 choice between paying their utilities bills, paying for  
16 food and paying for medicine. Those are the three basics  
17 they have to do. Everyone knows you've got to pay  
18 utilities bills. You can't sit in the dark. So they  
19 either don't buy food or don't buy medicine. Wow.  
20 That's scary. With everything going up, a 12 percent  
21 increase is just something that seniors cannot afford,  
22 period.

23 The people need you. They need the Public Utilities  
24 Commission, okay? You are our watchdog against greed and  
25 poverty for the poor, okay. That is because there's

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1 individuals, or as a group even, we can't shop around and  
2 purchase energy from someone else. We can't. Avista has  
3 a captive audience, and they know it. Avista seems to be  
4 a very well run observation to some extent. Stocks have  
5 increased this year, dividends are up, and the sale of  
6 the company, \$5 billion, 300,000,000, who's going to get  
7 that? Everything looks good for them, yet every time  
8 they need money, it's the customers who always have to  
9 suck it up and bear it because we don't get a choice.

10 So we look to you to help keep the rates down. So  
11 for that, I thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chanter.

13 All right. Doug Howell.

14 MR. HOWELL: Thank you so much for being here  
15 tonight. You all should be acknowledged for your  
16 endurance. Hopefully, it won't go past 8:00 o'clock  
17 tonight.

18 I was going to talk about expenditures, but I think  
19 there was a point that was made earlier, and the  
20 magnitude of that -- that -- that point was missed. When  
21 Brad Sauer talked about these coal ash ponds and now, how  
22 they are converting these monitoring wells to pump-back  
23 wells, I'd like to give another interpretation of what  
24 that means.

25 Most coal plants discharge their wastewater into a



1 body of water, but Colstrip, because it's so dry out  
2 there, it's unique. It's a desert, essentially, close to  
3 11 inches of rain a year, so they don't have a body of  
4 water that they can discharge their wastewaters, so they  
5 have this closed loop system.

6 And what they do is to ensure it remains a closed  
7 loop, when that toxic waste gets into the groundwater and  
8 the plume grows, as you know, they put in a monitoring  
9 well. When that monitoring well shows the pollution,  
10 they convert that monitoring well back to a pump-back  
11 well and they put that water back in the central pond.  
12 They try to accelerate their aeration, their evaporation  
13 of that toxic waste. So what's happened is that  
14 monitoring well shows pollution, they turn it into a  
15 pump-back well and then they move the monitoring well for  
16 the wrap.

17 Now, as Mr. Sauer reported, they've done that almost  
18 a thousand times, and they're still called as being in  
19 compliance with closed loop. You know, I don't call that  
20 compliance. I call that moving a goalpost. And that is  
21 a massive liability for ratepayers and it's growing.  
22 That isn't even what I wanted to talk about.

23 I would like to talk about expenditures. It's  
24 becoming clear now that Colstrip 3 and 4 is going to  
25 close. When we weren't prepared for the inevitability of

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1 1 and 2, we had to deal with now, okay, what you do with  
2 accelerated debt. We're facing that issue with 3 and 4.  
3 That's going to close much sooner than we anticipate and,  
4 once again, we won't be prepared, but that's going to  
5 show up for expenditures for you. And what I strongly  
6 recommend that you look at closely from here forward is  
7 any expense you get related to Colstrip, even if it's,  
8 quote/unquote, maintenance.

9 What we found, what our attorneys have found in  
10 participating in rate cases across the country, that  
11 there's a bunch of stuff that's shoved into maintenance  
12 that's not maintenance. In fact, in our lawsuit on the  
13 new-source review, which we settled so we never got the  
14 opportunity to prove we were right, we settled on that,  
15 but that led to the closure of 1 and 2, expenses were  
16 shoved in maintenance that we asserted were not.

17 So I strongly recommend that you give intense  
18 scrutiny to any expenses that you see that are called  
19 maintenance. And even at some point, maintenance itself  
20 becomes a life-extending measure, and you need to watch  
21 very carefully that we're not sinking in money that's  
22 going to push that plant out beyond 2025, because, again,  
23 that will be another area that rate payers take an  
24 unnecessary hit.

25 There's another piece I want to talk about is

1 that -- is what drives these decisions that gets you to  
2 these prudence determinations. And Avista has been using  
3 this model that they call the efficiency frontier. And  
4 you've heard -- it's really in some ways -- one way to  
5 describe it is a balance between least cost and least  
6 risk. My concern with that model, I think it is  
7 extremely short term in its economic view. If we were to  
8 really look at capital expenditures over decades, then we  
9 would come up with a much different result on what's  
10 least cost and least risk. And if we were thinking long  
11 term, renewables are going to be investments, like new  
12 gas plants, almost all the time. So I would like you to  
13 be really concerned about how you think of that time  
14 frame on the efficiency frontier when you're comparing  
15 these costs to these risks, and let me give you an  
16 example.

17 There must have been some type of model like that  
18 that was used when they authorized the expenditures in  
19 the early '80s for the coal ash ponds, and here is some  
20 of the thinking. Well, the energy firm said to the  
21 Colstrip owners, let's do this clay-lined ash ponds  
22 because it's cheap, and the likelihood of it leaking is  
23 small, but if it does leak, let's set aside \$2 million to  
24 pay for the drinking water for the town of Colstrip in  
25 case it gets corrupted. It got corrupted. It leaked.

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1 They were sued -- the civil penalty alone was 25 million,  
2 and now the price tag is probably well over a billion  
3 dollars to clean up that mess. At some point, when they  
4 made that decision, they used something very much like a  
5 efficiency frontier, least costs, least risk calculation.

6 So please don't get sucked into a shortsighted view  
7 of how that model can work. At this point of time in the  
8 age of climate change, if they say a gas plant lasts 35  
9 years, that gets us most of the way to our goal of 2050.  
10 I really encourage you to be thinking about all  
11 investments in a much shorter time frame. We just can't  
12 afford to do it any other way.

13 While we're talking about it, I just want to plant  
14 one more seed. What we're looking at in the future of  
15 all resources that you're going to have to do a prudency  
16 determination on is likely going to be gas plants, and we  
17 are jut beginning to learn of what the climate impacts  
18 are of those gas plants. And what the literature tells  
19 us, which we have now reviewed exhaustively of every  
20 government, every academic and every industry report that  
21 has been provided we have reviewed, and the average we  
22 see is a 3 percent leakage rate of the upstream methane.  
23 If you use a 100-year global warming potential or if you  
24 use a 20-year global potential, the methane as you may  
25 know is up to 87 times more powerful than carbon dioxide.

1           If you have that national average of 3 percent of  
2           leakage rate at the gas plants, you are already worse  
3           than a coal plant even before you build that gas plant.  
4           Coal is -- gas is becoming the new coal. Gas is our next  
5           big climate fight, and I hope you are prepared.

6           CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right. Thank you very much.  
7           Okay. David Camp.

8           MR. CAMP: Thank you again for having us here, for  
9           coming and seeing us here, hearing us out.

10          As an Avista ratepayer, I'd like to echo the  
11          comments made by Rebecca MacMullan, that if we're going  
12          to see an increase in rates, there really must be a link  
13          to a firm commitment to exit the Colstrip disaster. The  
14          Colstrip plant was simply a bad investment. If we can  
15          get out of that and facilitate that through the rate  
16          increase, then fine.

17          The second part of that, though, is we need to  
18          protect low-income rate payers, because in this area the  
19          low-income rate payers are truly low income, and they  
20          simply can't absorb a rate increase like the one that's  
21          been proposed. So if we can get Avista to move out of  
22          the Colstrip problem while also protecting low-income  
23          ratepayers and being granted their rate increase, I think  
24          it will work out for everyone. So I really have nothing  
25          more to say. I think that encapsulates it.

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1 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you very much.

2 Okay. Jean Kindem, are you here?

3 MS. KINDEM: Thank you very much for allowing us to  
4 have an opportunity to voice our opinion. I am a  
5 volunteer on the Planning and Management Council for the  
6 Aging and Long-Term Care. One of our emphasis is to keep  
7 people in their own homes rather than into nursing homes  
8 or other assisted-living facilities.

9 Thirteen percent of the American population in this  
10 area lives below the poverty line, and we are looking  
11 at -- if you have done any reading at all -- an age wave,  
12 where a lot of us are going to live longer and we're  
13 going to need services longer. And the cost of utilities  
14 for some of the providers who are taking in these aging  
15 people and allowing them to have somewhat of a life, it's  
16 costing them a great deal of money when you increase the  
17 cost of their utilities.

18 So what I would like to remind you is that, along  
19 with the 13 percent that is below the poverty line, we  
20 also have people who are handicapped, who have mental  
21 health issues and who are living on just a bare minimum  
22 amount of money. And we are very proud to be providers  
23 of services to this population, and I would like to ask  
24 the Utilities Commission to take into account that we are  
25 in a different part of the state than the west side. Our

1 poverty level is higher, and we need some assistance when  
2 it comes to you, the utilities. Thank you for allowing  
3 me to speak.

4 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you very much for coming out  
5 tonight.

6 Pauline Druffel, are you here?

7 MS. DRUFFEL: Yes.

8 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Please come forward. Thank you.  
9 Ms. Druffel, you have not been sworn in. You arrived  
10 after we did our group swearing in; is that correct?

11 MS. DRUFFEL: Yes.

12 CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right. Would you please raise  
13 your hand.

14 Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and  
15 nothing but the truth?

16 MS. DRUFFEL: I do.

17 CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right. Thank you very much.  
18 Proceed.

19 MS. DRUFFEL: Thank you. And thank you for coming  
20 to Spokane to hear our perspective about Avista's  
21 proposed rate increases. I was going to speak this  
22 afternoon, but then there wasn't time. Well, I gave it  
23 up, but because --

24 CHAIRMAN DANNER: You know, we are still accepting  
25 written comments, so if you do want to comment in

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1 writing, just let me know.

2 MS. DRUFFEL: I do know. Yes.

3 I want to talk about my concerns related to Avista's  
4 plan to continue to get electricity from the Colstrip  
5 power plant in Montana for 20 more years. I don't see  
6 that Avista is planning to pull out of their -- our  
7 ownership of that plant, nor that they are directing  
8 resources to clean up the damage done to the local people  
9 because of the plant. I object to raised rates just to  
10 continue doing the same disastrous harm to our planet.

11 I could imagine an ethical value of raising rates so  
12 as to prepare to pull out of Colstrip and get electricity  
13 from other sources, renewable sustainable resources, but  
14 I think it is unethical to know that Colstrip's way of  
15 producing electricity is harming the planet and to not  
16 try to ameliorate that damage. Other owners of Colstrip  
17 are talking about pulling out their investment of  
18 Colstrip, but Avista is talking about continuing their  
19 investment for 20 more years.

20 I fear that as ratepayers to Avista, we are going to  
21 be the ones paying for the damage that has been done by  
22 Colstrip, and we were just talking about the coal ash  
23 ponds as one specific that I'm also aware of and see that  
24 as major damage to the water supply in that area, and  
25 also the air. Somebody talked earlier this afternoon



1 about the asthma and the air pollution.

2 I want to say on another note, I'm aware that Avista  
3 does buy some electricity from the Palouse wind farm  
4 south of Spokane. I've signed up to use that, but Avista  
5 treats it as an extra for which I end up paying more in  
6 order to use what I consider to be a more ethical form of  
7 producing electricity. I would like them to consider  
8 this wind power as the national part of the mix along  
9 with hydroelectric power. So that's my comments.

10 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you very much. Appreciate  
11 it.

12 Elizabeth Williams?

13 MS. WILLIAMS: Again, thank you for coming to  
14 Spokane so we can give our views on this. I'm one who  
15 recycles or composts everything I possibly can. As an  
16 Avista ratepayer in the north end of Spokane County, it  
17 upset me greatly to find out Avista Utilities fuels 20  
18 percent of its power from Colstrip. I'm here to ask  
19 Avista Utilities to divest in the Colstrip mine in  
20 Montana. As a Avista Utilities customer, I do not want  
21 the energy I use coming from dirty coal anymore.  
22 Investment in clean energy is extremely important to me.

23 In the Census Business Patterns report in 2014,  
24 there were 76,572 people employed nationwide in the coal  
25 industry. Compare that 76,000 or so jobs to the Arby's

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1 fast-food company which employed approximately 80,000  
2 persons. Phasing out the coal industry is not going to  
3 have a huge impact on our nation's economy, especially  
4 with the multiple possibilities for clean energy jobs.

5 Steven Inskeep on today's NPR Morning Edition  
6 reported even China is consolidating mines and  
7 aggressively cutting back production for environmental  
8 reasons. We here in Spokane can do better. I would hope  
9 you would protect those in poverty from rate increases,  
10 as we've heard people speak tonight, and how important  
11 that is, though, personally, I would rather not pay  
12 Avista any more than I already do. I would rather have a  
13 slight increase in my bill to fund clean energy than to  
14 have Avista get 20 percent of its power from Colstrip and  
15 have anything to do with environmental contamination that  
16 the coal mine is causing.

17 Finally, with the approaching holiday season, we are  
18 reminded that there's a reason that for over 800 years,  
19 getting a lump of coal for Christmas has not been  
20 considered a good thing.

21 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you very much.

22 All right. Jace Bylenga, are you here? Come  
23 forward.

24 MR. BYLENGA: Yes. Hello, Commissioners, and I was  
25 out in the hall during the swearing-in, but I swear to

1 tell the truth.

2 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Stand up. All right. Raise your  
3 hand.

4 Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and  
5 nothing but the truth?

6 MR. BYLENGA: I do.

7 CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right. Proceed.

8 MR. BYLENGA: Thank you, Commissioners for coming up  
9 to Spokane again. Really appreciate it. My name is  
10 Jace Bylenga, and I would like to talk on behalf of some  
11 kids I know across the street at Shaw Middle School.

12 I was an AmeriCorps Avista volunteer for a couple of  
13 years and did some after-school programming with those  
14 kids, and this is one of the poorest neighborhoods in the  
15 state, and one other poorest neighborhoods that I've  
16 worked in also is the west central community on the other  
17 side of town. And as we were doing environmental  
18 educational programming with these kids, a lot of the  
19 reasons there was a need for that was there wasn't a lot  
20 of extra time for extracurricular stuff that was, you  
21 know, maybe talking about environmental issues.

22 And so just there being a deficit in the amount of  
23 education to low-income populations, I think, is going to  
24 potentially result in those folks maybe not knowing much  
25 about climate change or what it means to burn coal and

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1 things like that. But, however, these folks want to be  
2 responsible stewards of the planet, if they know the best  
3 ways to do that. And I don't want them to shoulder with  
4 the potential impacts from climate changes through  
5 potential costs associated with cleaning up the mess in  
6 Colstrip, Montana for the coal plant out there.

7 I understand that Avista has not publicly indicated  
8 whether or not they set -- have begun setting aside money  
9 for clean-up costs at the Colstrip plant, and, you know,  
10 looking at the calculations from Puget Sound Energy, they  
11 set aside some money, and so if you slice and dice that,  
12 it looks like Avista would be on the hook for at least  
13 \$100 million in clean-up costs and about \$6 million in  
14 economic transition funds for the community of the  
15 Colstrip. So they need to start saving that money and  
16 being fiscally responsible in terms of getting ready for  
17 these clean-up costs.

18 I would love to see it if -- if, you know, the  
19 low-income communities wouldn't have to bear the burden  
20 of those low-income costs, but I know we have to figure  
21 out how to do it fairly. It would be great if the  
22 shareholders wanted to take all of those costs, or maybe  
23 we could -- you know, Avista could figure out how to, you  
24 know, magically make the -- the cleanup cheaper. I don't  
25 know. They've got -- the coal place is hard for people

1 over there, they don't make a lot of money, so -- but  
2 keeping this coal plant running continually is -- it's  
3 just going to make more and more costs for future  
4 generations, whether it be cleaning up the toxic  
5 contamination at Culstrip or whether it's converted  
6 climate change impacts from our health costs, wildfires  
7 or, you know, the lithium effects. So thank you for your  
8 time and appreciate it.

9 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you.

10 Brian Henning, are you still here? Come forward.

11 MR. HENNING: Good evening. My name is Dr. Brian  
12 Henning. I'm a Avista rate payer, a resident of Spokane  
13 and professor of philosophy in environmental studies at  
14 Gonzaga University. I want to thank you for coming over  
15 to the east side of the state and hearing the concerns of  
16 Avista ratepayers. You really do have an impressive  
17 fortitude today. Thank you for sticking it out.

18 I would just like to just briefly address whether  
19 Avista is providing electricity at the lowest reasonable  
20 cost and whether its request of rate increase should be  
21 approved. Doing this, I would like to introduce the  
22 admittedly wonky idea of negative extranalties. This  
23 inelegant and euphemistic term is how economists describe  
24 a cost associated with an activity or product that is not  
25 reflected in the price.

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1           Classic example of negative extranalities is  
2           cigarettes. The price of a package of cigarettes could  
3           reflect the cost of growing, manufacturing, selling the  
4           product and the intended profit, but the price often does  
5           not. Included is health costs associated with smoking  
6           the product. These health costs are real and significant  
7           but they are borne not only by the smoker but by everyone  
8           else as well in the form of higher insurance premiums,  
9           lost work productivity and so on. These are what the  
10          economists call negative extranalities or costs  
11          associated with the product not reflected in the price.

12          The problem economists tell us is that negative  
13          extranalities distort the marketplace. They move capital  
14          towards products that only appear to be less expensive  
15          but, in fact, are actually more expensive if all the  
16          effects are included.

17          Let me give another very brief example: Let's say  
18          that I'm a local restaurant owner, and that I generate  
19          various forms of waste. I can't exactly dump that waste  
20          in the curb or in the street. I have to pay a company to  
21          haul it away, and this is reflected in the price as I  
22          charge my customers. But this is, in fact, what  
23          utilities and fossil fuel companies are doing.  
24          Electricity for fossil fuels such as coal and natural gas  
25          only appear to be less expensive because they get to dump

1 the waste products of their business, such as carbon  
2 dioxide and methane, into the atmosphere for free, at  
3 least for a little while longer.

4 How does this relate to Avista's rate case? The  
5 problem with Avista's rate case is based on the distorted  
6 marketplace in which the negative extranalties  
7 associated with this product are not sufficiently  
8 reflected in the price paid for a kilowatt hour of  
9 electricity or a therm of natural gas.

10 What are the negative extranalties associated with  
11 Avista's fuel mix? Since approximately half of its fuel  
12 mix comes from fossil fuels, the negative extranalties  
13 include air and water pollution that cause mortality and  
14 morbidity rates. The greenhouse gases that contribute to  
15 climate change that destroy our forest, increasing  
16 drought, damaging our crops, causing species extinction,  
17 warming seas and ocean acidification that harms the  
18 shellfish in our oceans causing rising seas and  
19 inundating our coastlines, creating larger, more  
20 destructive storms destroying entire cities.

21 All of these phenomena are associated with very  
22 really identifiable, quantifiable costs. They are real  
23 costs and they are borne by all of us. It's a grave  
24 injustice to these costs that are disproportionately  
25 borne by the poorest people in our community and in the

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1 world. And all of these costs are very real, and they're  
2 borne by all of us.

3 The problem I submit is that these costs are not  
4 reflected in the prices we pay in our utility. So when  
5 we reflect on whether our utility is delivering  
6 electricity at the lowest reasonable costs, the only  
7 responsible answer is no. We must have the courage to  
8 consider the full cost of generating electricity from  
9 fossil fuels. I encourage you to take a more holistic  
10 approach and examine all of the costs associated with  
11 electricity generation. If we do this, you will find we  
12 truly cannot afford electricity generated from fossil  
13 fuels.

14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you very much, Doctor.

16 Okay. Bonnie Roberts, are you here? Ms. Roberts, I  
17 need to swear you in as well.

18 MS. ROBERTS: I will assume the position.

19 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Do you swear to tell the truth,  
20 the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

21 MS. ROBERTS: I do so swear.

22 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you very much. Proceed.

23 MS. ROBERTS: I thank everybody tonight. I had a  
24 quick Cliff Notes version of environmental, economic,  
25 medical. It's all here. Thank for all the speakers and



1       thank you for coming out. I guess you didn't have to,  
2       but thank you for coming over to our side of the state to  
3       do your job. Awesome. I know everybody loves Avista. I  
4       got a bag with the food giveaway. It had the Avista logo  
5       on it. Who doesn't love a free bag, right? They do  
6       great work. We all love them.

7               \$22,000 a year. I didn't even make that a year  
8       working at the Spokane Housing Authority implementing --  
9       giving vouchers to low-income homeless people. About  
10      22,000 a day. Okay. I bet you can tell, I'm not one of  
11      the 1 percent. I know it. Now I'm retired, I get social  
12      security. Get 700 a month. I got a letter. My check is  
13      going up \$2. \$250 a month to heat my house.

14             Now, I know SNAP. Thank you SNAP. Without SNAP, I  
15      don't think I would be alive today. With that energy  
16      assistance, LIHEAP, low-income housing energy assistance  
17      program, LIHEAP are awesome, but we can't as a society  
18      rely on customers and charity. We want Avista to step up  
19      and do right. What do I have to do? I have a house,  
20      low-income house that was built back in the '20s. No  
21      insulation. You know, upstairs, I just hang rugs over  
22      the door. I have blankets over my windows, and when it  
23      gets really cold, I just close out my laundry room and  
24      pray that my washer don't freeze. We need -- we love  
25      Avista, right? They give help to people, they even

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1 put -- replenish their furnace, get it up to heating. I  
2 don't have forced-air heat. All I have is an electric  
3 baseboard heat. And when you don't own your home, they  
4 just help the landlord. So the low-income renters,  
5 seniors like me have nowhere to go. We don't get help.  
6 I'm not going to get a brand-new furnace in a house  
7 instead of baseboard heat. The only option I have is to  
8 turn it up and turn it down.

9 What do renters do? We have these thinly made poor  
10 houses, and I saw it firsthand when I worked at the  
11 housing authority. I feel like I'm speaking to thousands  
12 of seniors. I want to know if Avista raises their rate,  
13 how many seniors are going to turn off their respirator,  
14 turn off their oxygen machine? Are they going to take a  
15 bath like I do in a cold bathroom because I can't afford  
16 to heat the whole house. This is real, people, this is  
17 real. And I think Avista is real nice to give me a bag  
18 with a logo, but I want you to lower my rate.

19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you, Ms. Roberts.

21 That -- according to my sign-in sheet, that brings  
22 us to the end of the evening. Is there anybody in the  
23 room who has a comment to make and not signed up on the  
24 sheet and would like to make a comment tonight?

25 Okay. Going, going, gone. All right. So I want to

1       thank everybody for the opportunity to hear your comments  
2       tonight. I really have appreciated everybody coming out.  
3       I appreciate everybody preparing comments. I thought  
4       that we heard a lot of useful information.

5               So if you have a desire to expand on your remarks or  
6       to provide written testimony or for people you know that  
7       wanted to come out tonight and couldn't come out tonight,  
8       I would ask you to consider submitting comments in  
9       writing, and you can do that by e-mail at  
10       comments@utc.wa.gov. You can also mail them at the  
11       Washington UTC at PO Box 47250, Olympia, Washington  
12       98584. You can also call the UTC, if you like, by  
13       calling 1(888) 333-WUTC.

14               So that's the end of the evening. Thank you again  
15       for coming out, and we will be moving ahead with this  
16       rate case. We will be looking over the testimony. We  
17       will be having our hearings, and we will be coming out  
18       with an order in due course. So thank you very much. We  
19       are now adjourned.

20               (Proceedings concluded at 7:45 p.m.)

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