

Case: 181053

Title: NWN GRC

PI Coordinator: Andrew Roberts

Staff Lead: Kristen Hillstead

Total Comments: 4
In Favor: 0
Opposed: 4
Undecided: 0

Filing Support	Commenter	Source	Comments
No			
	Barbara Beier	Web	am opposed to the portion of the rate increase for residential customers involving the basic charge for month. The Basic charge would remain the same and any increase granted should be rolled into the rate per therm. The basic charge cannot be controlled by the customer by adjusting usage and is very unfair to those who are struggling to make ends meet financially and especially to elderly on fixed incomes. increasing the basic charge rather than the per therm charge also works against the goal of energy conservation since it isn't rewarded the same way it would be if the costs to consumers are in the per therm factor. I would draw your attention to the August 2019 Consumer Reports Magazine that discusses fees. On page 7 utility fees are discussed with the statement included: "hiking up such fees is a disservice to the public." The article points out fixed fees "weaken your control over your energy bills, shift a disproportionate burden onto low-usage and low-income customers, and reduce incentives for consumers to conserve energy because using less power won't spare them from the fixed fee." I also hope you are carefully reviewing whether there is a truly a need for the entirety of the "\$6.8 million is needed to cover annual operating costs not covered by current rates" as stated in the Northwest Natural "Notice of Request for Rate Increase."
	MIKHAILA GONZALES	Web	I opposed the proposed settlement on two points: 1) Unless the increase of annual base revenue is allocated exclusively for the strategic decommissioning and replacement of natural gas refinement, distribution and service, it would stall and prevent progress towards the targets outlined in SB 5116 2) The "decoupling" of fixed costs from volume of sales shifts cost from industrial/commercial customers to retail customers, and would disincentivize high volume customers from investing in conservation and energy efficiency.

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Public Comments by Case

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	Larry Siroshton	Web	<p>I have been a NW Natural Gas customer for nearly thirty years. I have found their services to be exceptional and have been satisfied with the costs for natural gas as a utility. Costs have actually decreased over time. However, I do not think the Residential and Basic charge rate increases are reasonable. I understand that an increase has been some time in coming, but do not find that in and of itself as a justification for large increases. The rate of 10.8% for Residential is just too high. The Basic charge increase of \$2 a month, or a whopping 28.57%, is in my point of view outrageous and there is no way me to mitigate its effect. With the Residential rate increase I can use less gas. However, with the Basic charge increase I have no way to mange the cost. I am simply compelled to pay it. In looking at various indicators in Washington's economy there is little that appears to support such a sizable increase. Certainly the cost-of-living has not increased at that pace and neither have average salaries, other than those of tax supported teacher equalization increases. Housing and rent increases are literally threatening to destroy Washington's adult security and makes every one of our children the target of poverty and all its related issues. Housing costs are in the control of the most greedy of our State's profiteers, and is in my point of view Washington's greatest challenge to provide for its citizenry.</p> <p>Though I disagree with the Residential rate increase, I have some power over my own economy should it be approved, i.e., I can reduce my use, and thus, my monthly expense. Being cold in the winter is not nice, but I would choose that rather than being unable to meet my debts. However, there is nothing I can do to manage the Basic use increase. My personal budget will increase irrespective of my effort to control my monthly expenses. It is like a regressive tax. I strongly object to such a large Basic use increase. Unfortunately I do not have the total projected revenue related to these increases. Nor do I have the expenses submitted to review and justify them. Even more, I have no information about profit margins sought by the Company, so my remarks must stand based on my general knowledge of the current state of Washington's economy; my experience trying to be a responsible Washington Citizen accountable for my own personal economy; and my common sense. Increases of these sizes are excessive and should not be approved in a healthy approach to operating stable communities and states where our citizenry can flourish.</p>

Total Comments: 4**In Favor: 0****Opposed: 4****Undecided: 0**

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	Mike M	Web	<p>Re NW Natural's Notice of Request for Rate Increase, we oppose this request to increase rates. The "Summary of Requested Rate Increase" shows the residential rate would increase the most (overall % increase = 10.8%) compared to the three other service types (8,8%, 4.7%, and 4.4%). This is unfair and non-equitable, as residents, especially those on fixed incomes, have the least flexibility and capacity to pay. The other three service types are better able to afford these increases, if the WUTC allows NW Natural's request at all.</p> <p>In addition, NW Natural proposes to increase the basic residential charge from \$7/mo. to \$9/mo. If this request was allowed, and it should not, this would mean that residential customers would pay this unfair cost regardless of the amount of natural gas used. Conservation of natural gas then is not a meaningful option, and residents, especially those on fixed incomes, would be paying a disproportionately greater amount.</p> <p>Please do not allow NW Natural to raise natural gas rates as they have requested.</p>