



STATE OF WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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October 17, 2023

NOTICE OF RECESSED OPEN MEETING
(Set for Tuesday, November 21, 2023, at 2 p.m.)
(Requested filings due Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 5 p.m.)

Re: In the Matter of Utility Wildfire Preparedness, Docket U-210254

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Over the last several years, the Commission has required regulated electric utilities to submit written wildfire preparedness plans to provide transparency into each company's wildfire risks and related planning. Additionally, each utility has presented its respective wildfire preparedness efforts to the Commission, and after each wildfire season, each utility has returned to report on the effectiveness of the fire mitigation and communication plans.

During the 2023 legislative session, the legislature enacted Second Substitute House Bill 1032,¹ which provides a framework to develop universal standards for wildfire mitigation plans by October 31, 2024. The Commission anticipates that plans filed with the Commission post that date will comply with the new statute. In the meantime, the Commission will continue to its practice to review utilities' plans and reports following fire season.

The Commission requests Avista Corporation d/b/a Avista Utilities (Avista), PacifiCorp d/b/a Pacific Power & Light (Pacific Power), and Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to file their current 2023 wildfire mitigation plans with the Commission in this Docket and with the Utility Wildland Fire Prevention Advisory Committee no later than 5 p.m. on Tuesday, November 14, 2023. Further, the Commission requests the utilities to submit responses to the questions identified below, as well as any requested information in this Docket no later than 5 p.m. on Tuesday, November 14, 2023.

¹ See Laws of 2023, ch. 132.

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The Commission intends to hear from regulated electric utilities about the effectiveness of the utilities' fire mitigation and communication plans during the 2023 wildfire season, lessons learned, and planned updates to their mitigation and communication plans at its recessed open meeting on November 21, 2023, beginning at 2:00 p.m.

The Commission's understanding of utility wildfire risk and planning would be aided by submission in this Docket of any recent written updates or changes the utilities have made to their wildfire preparedness and communications plans and lessons learned in the 2023 wildfire season. The Commission further requests that Avista, PacifiCorp, and PSE respond to the following questions and requests for information in their responses and be prepared to discuss these at the recessed open meeting:

1. Experience with the 2023 wildfire season, including data and statistics related to:
 - a. The number of fires that occurred in the utility's service territory in the 2023 season.
 - b. The intensity of fires in the 2023 season in terms of acres burned and estimated damage to buildings and infrastructure.
 - c. Whether the utilities' operations were impacted by fires, and, if so, how and where.
 - d. Whether wildfires developed in areas defined as greater risk or in other areas designated as lesser risk.
 - e. Whether thresholds for use of the current set of fire mitigation tools (such as public safety power shut offs and dry land mode) are effective, if they have been working as intended, and if any new tools have been added or are needed.
2. What updates have been made to wildfire mitigation plans since November of 2022?
3. Whether communication plans worked as intended and any gaps identified.
 - a. What strategies did the utility use or explore for this wildfire season to enhance situational awareness for its customers?
 - b. What partnerships has the utility cultivated with first responders, land managers, and emergency operations personnel in preparing for the 2023 wildfire season?
 - c. What communication channels and procedures are in place to coordinate planning and response efforts with these entities?
 - d. How were those partnerships leveraged in the utility's wildfire response?
 - e. What plans did the utility have in place to communicate with customers, including Highly Impacted Communities, Vulnerable Populations, medically vulnerable

customers, and Access and Functional Needs customers, about wildfire risk for this season overall, as well as specific wildfire risks or events?

- i. How effective was customer communication regarding wildfire events? Were there any lessons learned?
 - ii. If communications were not distributed to all customers, please explain who was excluded and why.
 - f. What information did the utility provide to customers about the wildfire risk mitigation work it is performing?
4. What local, state, federal, or other privately funded research, pilots, or programs exploring emerging wildfire mitigation technologies or best practices are you participating in?
 5. For companies with wildfire-related insurance policies covering a multi-state service territory, how are these insurance costs delineated between customers in different states for recovery?
 6. Please provide a narrative response on the impact wildfire risk is having on insurance costs, and what work utilities are doing to mitigate that impact.

MEETING PARTICIPATION

The Commission will hold the recessed open meeting virtually, and Commission headquarters will not be open to the public for in-person participation. Interested persons may listen to the meeting by telephone by calling (253) 215-8782 and using conference ID 849 3120 1231 and Passcode: 268412. To participate in the meeting via Zoom on a computer or mobile device, please use the following link: [click to join the meeting](#). If you wish to be placed on the interested parties contact list, please submit your request to the Commission's Records Center at records@utc.wa.gov.

If you wish to participate and need an interpreter, one will be provided at no cost to you. If you need an interpreter, please contact the Commission at least one business day prior to the meeting by calling (360) 664-1140 or by sending an email to Paige Doyle at paige.doyle@utc.wa.gov.

The Commission is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to participants with disabilities. If you need a reasonable accommodation for the recessed open meeting, please contact the Commission at least one business day prior to the workshop by calling (360) 664-1132 or by sending an email to human_resources@utc.wa.gov. For TTY service, please call the Washington Relay Service at 1-800-833-6384 or 711.

If you have questions regarding this recessed open meeting, you may contact Andrew Roberts, Regulatory Analyst, at andrew.roberts@utc.wa.gov or (360) 664-1101.

KATHY HUNTER,
Acting Executive Director and Secretary