

**Docket Nos. UE-220053, UG-220054, and UE-210854
(Consolidated) – Vol VI**

WUTC v. Avista Corporation

September 30, 2022



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Page 372

BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND)
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION,)
)
Complainant,)
) Dockets UE-220053,
vs.) UG-220054, UE-210854
) (Consolidated)
AVISTA CORPORATION, d/b/a)
AVISTA UTILITIES,)
)
Respondent.)

VIRTUAL SETTLEMENT HEARING
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE ANDREW O'CONNELL
VOLUME VI
PAGES 372-443

September 30, 2022
10:40 a.m.

* A PORTION OF TESTIMONY IS DESIGNATED CONFIDENTIAL
AND IS SEALED UNDER SEPARATE COVER. *

DATE TAKEN: SEPTEMBER 30, 2022
REPORTED BY: CARISA KITSELMAN, RPR, CCR 2018

Page 373

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Page 375

SETTLEMENT HEARING
EXAMINATION INDEX

EXAMINATION	PAGE
Robert Brandkamp	
Cross by Ms. Paisner (continued)	384
Clint Kaich	
Cross by Ms. Suetake	388
Mark Thies	
Cross by Ms. Paisner (NONCONFIDENTIAL)	393
Cross by Ms. Paisner (CONFIDENTIAL)	408
Redirect by Mr. Meyer (CONFIDENTIAL)	429
Redirect by Mr. Meyer (NONCONFIDENTIAL)	438
EXHIBITS	
EXHIBITS FOR IDENTIFICATION	PAGE
Data Request No. 103C supplemental admitted	380

Page 376

1 September 30, 2022
2 10:40 A.M.
3 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Good morning. Today is
4 Friday, September 30, 2022. The time is approximately
5 10:30 a.m. -- apologies, 10:40 a.m. My name is
6 Andrew O'Connell. I am the administrative law judge for
7 the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
8 presiding in this matter along with the Commissioners.
9 And they will join us in a moment.
10 Today we are convening for the continued portion
11 of a settlement hearing that began on September 21, 2022,
12 in consolidated Dockets UE-220053, UG-220054, and
13 UE-210854, which is an Avista's electronic and natural
14 gas general rate case and its electric service
15 reliability reporting plan.
16 On September 21st we did not have enough time to
17 finish all witness testimony prior to the end of the day.
18 And today's date was selected in consultation with the
19 parties and in consideration of the Commission's
20 availability.
21 We are scheduled to end at 2 p.m., but I do not
22 expect us to take nearly that long.
23 As before, we are using videoconferencing
24 software so that observers can see video of witnesses,
25 attorneys, myself, and the commissioners during the

Page 377

1 hearing. No other participant or observer should appear
2 on video.
3 Let's take short appearances. And reminding
4 everyone, please tell me how you would like me to address
5 you today. For me, you can use he/him pronouns and
6 address me as Judge or Judge O'Connell.
7 Let's start with staff and then Avista.
8 MR. CALLAGHAN: Thank you, Your Honor. Nash
9 Callaghan, assistant attorney general, on behalf of
10 Commission staff. My pronouns are he/him.
11 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Thank you.
12 For Avista.
13 MR. MEYER: Sure. My name is David Meyer.
14 And I represent Avista. And my pronouns are he and him.
15 JUDGE O'CONNELL: And for the Alliance of
16 Western Energy Consumers -- no, I apologize. Getting
17 ahead of myself. I apologize.
18 Public Counsel.
19 MS. PAISNER: Good morning. This is Ann
20 Paisner with the Public Counsel unit of the Washington
21 Attorney General's Office. My pronouns are she/her. And
22 you may address me as Ms. Paisner.
23 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Thank you.
24 Last time I moved on too fast from Public
25 Counsel.

Page 378

1 Is there going to be anyone else appearing?
2 MS. SUETAKE: Yes. Thank you, Judge
3 O'Connell. My name is Nina Suetake on behalf of the
4 Public Counsel unit. My pronouns are she/her. And you
5 may address me as Ms. Suetake.
6 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Thank you.
7 And for the Alliance of Western Energy
8 Consumers.
9 MS. MOSER: Good morning, Your Honor. Sommer
10 Moser with Davison Van Cleve on behalf of AWEC. My
11 pronouns are she/her. And you may address me as
12 Ms. Moser.
13 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Thank you.
14 For the Northwest Energy Coalition.
15 MS. HARDWICK: Good morning, Your Honor. My
16 name is Ellie Hardwick on behalf of the Northwest Energy
17 Coalition. My pronouns are she/her. And Ms. Hardwick is
18 fine. Thank you.
19 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Thank you.
20 And for the Energy Project.
21 MR. ZAKAI: Good morning, Your Honor. My name
22 is Yochanan Zakai. I'm with the Shute, Mihaly &
23 Weinberger. Here today representing the Energy Project.
24 My pronouns are he/him. And you may address me as
25 Mr. Zakai.

Page 379

1 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Thank you.
2 For Sierra Club.
3 MR. DENNISON: Good morning, Your Honor. Jim
4 Dennison for Sierra Club. My pronouns are he/him. And
5 Mr. Dennison is fine.
6 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Thank you.
7 For Walmart.
8 MS. BALDWIN: Good morning. This is Vicki
9 Baldwin on behalf of Walmart. I'm with Parsons Behle &
10 Latimer. You can address me as Ms. Baldwin. And my
11 pronouns are she/her.
12 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Thank you. And good
13 morning.
14 For Small Business Utility Advocates.
15 MS. WEBERSKI: Good morning, Your Honor.
16 Jennifer Weberski on behalf of Small Business Utility
17 Advocates or SBUA. My pronouns are she/her. And you can
18 address me as Ms. Weberski.
19 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Okay. Thank you.
20 Moving on regarding exhibits. Avista SC-6C
21 which updated pages 8 and 9 of that exhibit. And that
22 was Avista's response to Public Counsel data request 103C
23 supplemental. The parties have stipulated to the
24 admission of that revision to the exhibit.
25 ///

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 380</p> <p>1 (Data Request No. 103C supplemental admitted.)</p> <p>2</p> <p>3 JUDGE O'CONNELL: I want to turn to Public 4 Counsel.</p> <p>5 In the last hearing we discussed a due date for 6 the submission of public comments. But at the end we 7 suspended that and we're going to address it again now. 8 The Puget Sound Energy general rate case hearing is on 9 Monday. And with that in mind, I want to ask if Public 10 Counsel has a reasonable deadline they would like to 11 recommend for compiling and filing the public comments 12 exhibit with the Commission.</p> <p>13 MS. PAISNER: Yes. Thank you, Your Honor. 14 Public Counsel would like to recommend 15 Wednesday, October 12th, as a deadline for the public 16 comment exhibit filing.</p> <p>17 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Okay. I think that's 18 reasonable.</p> <p>19 If there is not any objection, I'm going to make 20 that the deadline for the public comment exhibits. 21 They'll be set to be filed on October 12, 2022.</p> <p>22 And I'm going to reiterate this at the end of 23 the hearing today, but I will issue a notice of bench 24 request with -- any bench requests that have been made 25 throughout the hearing, including this one, which I'm</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 382</p> <p>1 I will add a side note that I've been in 2 communication with the parties via e-mail and have used 3 those communications to compile a list of appropriate 4 persons for the confidential session.</p> <p>5 So let me pause there.</p> <p>6 Is there any change to that list that needs to 7 be made?</p> <p>8 Hearing none, we are going to move on.</p> <p>9 When questions touching on the confidential 10 information have finished, we are going to return to the 11 main session of this virtual hearing and we will continue 12 with any wrap-up questions that are not confidential, and 13 then we will address all other matters.</p> <p>14 At the end of our hearing on September 21st, 15 Public Counsel and Avista waived cross-examination of the 16 remaining witnesses Baldwin-Bonney, Earle, and Coppola. 17 Those witnesses are excused as the Commission has no 18 questions for any of them.</p> <p>19 Are there any questions about how we are going 20 to proceed today before I indicate to the Commissioners 21 that we are ready for them to join us?</p> <p>22 I'm seeing head shaking and not hearing 23 anything.</p> <p>24 So we'll take just a short pause. We're not 25 going to go off the record. And I am going to ask that</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 381</p> <p>1 going to designate as BR -- bench request No. 3 or BR-3. 2 Let's talk about today's hearing and the 3 schedule for today.</p> <p>4 We are going to begin where we left off on 5 September 21st. Public Counsel was nearly done with its 6 questioning of Avista's witness Brandkamp. And after 7 consultation with the parties, we are going to, instead 8 of taking Avista's witness Thies, we are going to take 9 Avista witness Kalich.</p> <p>10 And then last of the planned witnesses, we will 11 have Avista witness Thies testify.</p> <p>12 Public Counsel has indicated that it has 13 questions that must necessarily touch upon confidential 14 information for Mr. Thies. And first we'll have Public 15 Counsel ask any preliminary questions that do not touch 16 upon confidential information.</p> <p>17 And once Public Counsel indicates its questions 18 will begin to touch upon confidential information, we 19 will take a short pause and our staff from the Commission 20 who are administering this virtual hearing will create a 21 breakout confidential session. Only the persons 22 identified by the parties as being in attendance and 23 having signed a confidentiality agreement will be allowed 24 into that session as well as the Commissioners and their 25 advisory staff.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 383</p> <p>1 the Commissioners join us and turn on their video. 2 And, Mr. Meyer, while we're waiting for all of 3 the Commissioners to join us, please indicate to 4 Mr. Brandkamp that we are going to be ready for him to 5 appear and testify.</p> <p>6 MR. MEYER: He's positioned and ready to go. 7 Thank you.</p> <p>8 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Mr. Callaghan, let me ask 9 one question of Staff in the interim here while we're 10 still waiting.</p> <p>11 I see that there's another representative for 12 staff, Mr. Roberson. Should he also be added to the 13 confidential session?</p> <p>14 MR. CALLAGHAN: Your Honor, I didn't 15 anticipate that Mr. Roberson would be joining us. But he 16 certainly can be added.</p> <p>17 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Okay. Thank you.</p> <p>18 MR. CALLAGHAN: Thank you.</p> <p>19 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: Chair Danner, are you 20 on? I can see you listed but without your camera and 21 sound. There you are.</p> <p>22 CHAIR DANNER: I am on. Thank you.</p> <p>23 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Okay. Thank you.</p> <p>24 Let's turn now and start where we left off with 25 Public Counsel's questions for Avista witness Brandkamp.</p>

Page 384

1 Mr. Brandkamp, I would like to remind you that
2 you remain under oath having been sworn in on
3 September 21st.
4 Mr. Meyer, is there any introduction of your
5 witness that you would like to make before we continue?
6 MR. MEYER: No, there's not. Thank you. He's
7 here for just a continuation of his cross.
8 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Okay. Thank you. Then I
9 will turn it over to Public Counsel.
10 Go ahead, Ms. Paisner.
11 MS. PAISNER: Thank you, Judge O'Connell.
12 CROSS-EXAMINATION (continued)
13 BY MS. PAISNER:
14 **Q. Good morning, Mr. Brandkamp.**
15 **Would you please turn to page 7 of your rebuttal**
16 **testimony, REB-1CT?**
17 A. Okay.
18 **Q. Beginning on line 12 and through the end of the**
19 **page and on to the following page, you respond to**
20 **Mr. Coppola's testimony that the Company's wildfire**
21 **resiliency plan should have a mitigating impact on**
22 **insurance premiums for the company in future years.**
23 **And your response in those lines, those pages,**
24 **is that it will not affect it.**
25 **Is that correct?**

Page 385

1 A. So it will not have a direct impact on premium
2 savings for the company.
3 But eventually as the risk of wildfires go down,
4 we should forgo additional increases because of fires
5 that we might have had. So it will help stabilize the
6 rates.
7 **Q. The Company is spending tens of million of**
8 **dollars to prevent fires through the wildfire resiliency**
9 **plan and vegetation management programs; is that correct?**
10 A. Yes.
11 **Q. Why, then, would the company not realize any**
12 **benefits through lower insurance premiums as a result of**
13 **spending that much money annually?**
14 A. Because the current marketplace does not provide
15 credits for any type of wildfire plans. It is -- it is
16 expected now that companies will have some type of plan,
17 some type of baseline controls in terms of addressing
18 risk.
19 But in terms of companies offering discounts
20 because a plan exists that is not available in the
21 marketplace today from insurers.
22 **Q. How certain are you that those fire prevention**
23 **programs will not reduce insurance premiums in coming**
24 **years?**
25 A. So as I -- as I stated at the beginning of this

Page 386

1 question, it will have an indirect impact. Because if
2 you can reduce the fire ignitions and frequency of fires,
3 those that have lost energy will not have in the future
4 which will generate additional premium increases above
5 the risk premium increases that we're already getting now
6 because we live in an area that is prone to increased
7 fire risk.
8 MS. PAISNER: Thank you. I have no other
9 questions for Mr. Brandkamp.
10 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Thank you.
11 I recall you saying at the end of our hearing
12 last time that you were just nearly finished, and you
13 were spot on.
14 Mr. Meyer, is there any redirect from questions
15 today and questions on September 21st?
16 MR. MEYER: There is not. Thank you.
17 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Okay.
18 Mr. Brandkamp, I'm going to pause for a moment,
19 look to the Commissioners. I don't believe there are any
20 bench questions but I'll pause.
21 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: No questions.
22 CHAIR DANNER: No questions.
23 COMMISSIONER DOUMIT: No questions. Thank
24 you.
25 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Thank you.

Page 387

1 Mr. Brandkamp, thank you for your testimony
2 today and on September 21st. You are excused.
3 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
4 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Okay. So to update the
5 commissioners on a slight change of plan with the
6 schedule. The parties and I have discussed that we
7 should go ahead and skip to Avista's witness Kalich. And
8 then take Mr. Thies last as he will be -- he will have
9 testimony that touches upon confidential information so
10 that we can get as much testimony that is nonconfidential
11 into the record before we then jump into a confidential
12 session.
13 So let's go ahead and ask for Mr. Kalich to turn
14 on his video. I see that his video is on.
15 Mr. Kalich, will you please raise your right
16 hand.
17 * * * * *
18 CLINT KALICH, having been first duly sworn, was
19 examined and testified as
20 follows:
21 THE WITNESS: I do.
22 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Thank you.
23 And how would you like us to address you today?
24 THE WITNESS: Yeah. Mr. Kalich would be
25 great.
JUDGE O'CONNELL: Thank you.

Page 388

1 Mr. Meyer.
2 MR. MEYER: Yes. Thank you.
3 For the record, Mr. Kalich, please state your
4 full name and your title and your employer.
5 THE WITNESS: Clint Kalich. I'm senior
6 manager of energy analysis. And I work for Avista
7 utilities.
8 MR. MEYER: Thank you.
9 The witness is available for cross.
10 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Turn now to Public Counsel.
11 Ms. Suetake, I see your video on. So go ahead.
12 CROSS-EXAMINATION
13 BY MS. SUETAKE:
14 **Q. Good morning, Mr. Kalich. My name is Nina**
15 **Suetake, and I'm here on behalf of Public Counsel unit.**
16 **I will try to be very quick because I understand you are**
17 **not feeling well.**
18 **Do you have a copy of your testimony in front of**
19 **you, your direct testimony?**
20 A. I do, yes.
21 **Q. Okay. And could you please turn to page 4?**
22 A. I'm there.
23 **Q. On lines 10 through 16 -- I'll give you a**
24 **second.**
25 **Is it correct that the power supply methodology**

Page 389

1 **uses a three-month historical average of actual**
2 **electricity and national gas prices for the forward rate**
3 **period?**
4 A. Yes, it does.
5 **Q. Do you have a copy of the cross-examination**
6 **Exhibit EGK-7X?**
7 A. Yes, I do.
8 **Q. And are you familiar with this data request**
9 **response?**
10 A. Yes, I am.
11 **Q. Okay. And it -- is it correct that you are --**
12 **sorry. Never mind.**
13 **Is it correct that Avista states in this**
14 **response that the proposed level of power supply expense**
15 **is based on a forward look of resource and load**
16 **requirements for the pro forma period?**
17 A. Yes.
18 **Q. And if you can give me one second. I need to**
19 **pull up your -- apologies. I am missing your rebuttal**
20 **testimony in front of me.**
21 MS. SUETAKE: Your Honor, I'm sorry. If I can
22 get a moment. I failed to open all of the documents.
23 BY MS. SUETAKE:
24 **Q. Never mind.**
25 **Looking at this data request response, is it**

Page 390

1 **correct that you state that there is typically no**
2 **estimate or forecast that uses data more recent than four**
3 **years old?**
4 A. That is what is stated in the response, yes.
5 **Q. I would like to discuss this with you a little**
6 **bit.**
7 **Are you saying that there is no forecast that**
8 **uses anything more recent than four years ago, 2018?**
9 A. Yeah. Ms. Suetake, I think -- I believe I see
10 where you're going here with this question.
11 The -- the response here had some information on
12 some of the larger-cost components. We struggle a little
13 bit -- or I personally struggle a little bit -- with the
14 intent of the response and was trying to be responsive.
15 So I think in that statement, I was thinking
16 more of the assumptions around, say, the outage rates or
17 the maintenance rates for our power plants or some of the
18 market revenue.
19 So -- and the last paragraph, I did mention
20 because I was thinking of things that may not have been
21 otherwise documented where I talk about the work papers,
22 revised the additional information. And I think you're
23 clearly pointing out here that the price is based on a
24 more recent set of forecasts. It is three months. It's
25 stated in testimony and the data provided in working

Page 391

1 papers.
2 **Q. Okay.**
3 A. So that would run counter to that specific
4 sentence. I was hoping, I guess, in looking at this last
5 paragraph that would have differentiated that.
6 **Q. Okay. Thank you. I was going to walk you**
7 **through your work papers, but I think you've answered.**
8 **Just to make sure, national -- for instance,**
9 **natural gas prices would be more recent than four years**
10 **old -- the four years; is that correct?**
11 A. Yes, yes.
12 **Q. Okay. And that -- do those include -- do the**
13 **power prices and natural gas prices include data from**
14 **2021 even?**
15 A. They would be based upon, as the testimony
16 identifies later, it was a three-month average up through
17 August of last year. So they would have been 2021, all
18 of the data.
19 MS. SUETAKE: Okay. Thank you.
20 I believe that is all my questions for you.
21 Thank you.
22 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
23 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Mr. Meyer, any
24 cross-examination -- sorry, redirect?
25 MR. MEYER: Here I am. There is none. Thank

Page 392

1 you.
2 Thank you, Mr. Kalich. Take care of yourself.
3 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
4 JUDGE O'CONNELL: I'm going to look to the
5 Commissioners.
6 Again, I don't believe there are any bench
7 questions. But did that bring any?
8 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: I have no questions.
9 CHAIR DANNER: No questions.
10 COMMISSIONER DOUMIT: No questions, Your
11 Honor. Thank you.
12 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Thank you. Mr. Kalich,
13 thank you for your testimony today. You are excused.
14 THE WITNESS: Thank you, Judge O'Connell.
15 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Okay. Now let's have Avista
16 witness Thies appear on video and testify.
17 The plan is that -- well, let me ask Ms. Paisner
18 for Public Counsel. Are there -- I'm assuming that there
19 are some preliminary questions at the beginning of your
20 examination that are not confidential; is that correct?
21 MS. PAISNER: Yes, that is correct.
22 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Okay. When you're done with
23 those, please indicate to us when your questions will
24 start to necessarily require that we get into
25 confidential information, and we will take a pause before

Page 393

1 asking those questions, and we will move to confidential
2 session.
3 MS. PAISNER: Okay. Thank you. That was my
4 plan.
5 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Okay. I see we have
6 Mr. Thies on video.
7 Mr. Thies, I want to remind you that you remain
8 under oath having been sworn in during the hearing on
9 September 21st.
10 Mr. Meyer, is there any introduction of your
11 witness again that you would like to make before we
12 continue?
13 MR. MEYER: Just full name and position with
14 the company, please.
15 THE WITNESS: Mark Thies. I'm the executive
16 vice president, chief financial officer, and treasurer of
17 Avista.
18 MR. MEYER: Thank you. That's all I have.
19 He's ready for cross.
20 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Okay. Ms. Paisner, please
21 go ahead.
22 CROSS-EXAMINATION
23 BY MS. PAISNER:
24 **Q. Good morning, Mr. Thies.**
25 A. Good morning.

Page 394

1 **Q. I think I would first like to make a**
2 **clarification in Exhibit MTT-12CX where there is a**
3 **reference to -- the Company's response to Public Counsel**
4 **data request 328C. Where this reference appears in that**
5 **exhibit on the right-hand column for sources, I will**
6 **refer to it as Exhibit MTT-9CX, which is how it has been**
7 **renamed. So I just wanted to make that clear**
8 **clarification before beginning.**
9 MR. MEYER: Excuse me. This is Mr. Meyer.
10 I'm finally to that page and the source column.
11 Could you direct us to the line number in the source
12 column?
13 MS. PAISNER: Yes, that's correct.
14 MR. MEYER: I'm sorry. I didn't hear that.
15 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Ms. Paisner, I think I can
16 clarify the question for us all.
17 In that source column, there -- there is an
18 exhibit indicated PC cross exhibit X -- big X little X,
19 indicated Public Counsel data request 328C with various
20 attachments.
21 Is that -- I see several lines that are
22 indicated with that.
23 MS. PAISNER: Yes.
24 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Is that supposed -- is that
25 big X a placeholder for -- I'm sorry, is it 6X that you

Page 395

1 said?
2 MS. PAISNER: 9CX.
3 JUDGE O'CONNELL: 9C --
4 MS. PAISNER: MTT-9CX. All of them should be
5 replaced with that. And we can refile that exhibit as
6 well.
7 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Mr. Meyer, does that clarify
8 for your question?
9 MR. MEYER: It does. Yeah, thank you.
10 JUDGE O'CONNELL: And, yes, please,
11 Ms. Paisner, if you could just correct that so it's clear
12 in the record. And if there has to be reference back to
13 this cross exhibit that we won't have to worry about
14 having to remember what exhibit it was referring to.
15 Thank you.
16 MS. PAISNER: We will do that. Thank you.
17 JUDGE O'CONNELL: And go ahead, please.
18 MS. PAISNER: Okay.
19 BY MS. PAISNER:
20 **Q. Mr. Thies, do you have a copy of**
21 **Elizabeth Andrews' rebuttal testimony, EMA-7T?**
22 MR. MEYER: Excuse me. Let me provide the
23 witness a copy of that.
24 And what page was that?
25 BY MS. PAISNER:

Page 396

1 **Q. Please turn to page 32.**
 2 **JUDGE O'CONNELL: Thank you for pausing so we**
 3 **can all get there.**
 4 THE WITNESS: EMA-7T, is that what you said,
 5 I'm sorry, Ms. Paisner, just to make sure.
 6 BY MS. PAISNER:
 7 **Q. Yes. It's Exhibit EMA-7T, this is**
 8 **Elizabeth Andrews' rebuttal testimony.**
 9 A. Page 32.
 10 **Q. Starting on page 32, line 9.**
 11 A. I'm there.
 12 **Q. Okay.**
 13 A. Or I have it in front of me, I guess I should
 14 say. I have it in front of me.
 15 **Q. Okay. So beginning on line 9 of this page and**
 16 **through the next five pages, Ms. Andrews discusses her**
 17 **objection, or the Company's objection, to the adjustments**
 18 **to pension and OPEB proposed by Public Counsel.**
 19 **It appears on these pages that the main**
 20 **objection that the Company has is that Mr. Coppola's**
 21 **analysis of pension and OPEB expenses, that in his**
 22 **analysis, he used information from a December 2020**
 23 **actuarial run instead of more recent information.**
 24 **Is that your understanding?**
 25 A. That is my general understanding, yes.

Page 397

1 **Q. Okay. For my next few questions I'll be**
 2 **referring to Exhibits MTT-8X through 11X, so far no**
 3 **confidential material. But these are the exhibits and**
 4 **these are data requests 327 through 30.**
 5 **I noticed that on these DR responses that the**
 6 **Company submitted, you are identified as the witness; is**
 7 **that correct?**
 8 A. Yes. I don't -- on all of them, I haven't
 9 looked at every single one of them, but I assume that I
 10 am, yes. I see 8X. I can look at the others just to
 11 make sure if that is helpful.
 12 **Q. Are you able to answer questions about this**
 13 **subject matter as it is discussed in these data requests**
 14 **and in Ms. Andrews' rebuttal testimony?**
 15 MR. MEYER: Your Honor -- let me go on with
 16 video here.
 17 JUDGE O'CONNELL: For the record, this is
 18 Mr. Meyer.
 19 MR. MEYER: Okay. Good. We're all set.
 20 Just -- I'm not sure where this is going. But
 21 in advance of last week's hearing, I communicated with
 22 Ms. Paisner anticipating that there might be some overlap
 23 between Ms. Andrews and Mr. Thies. And I tried to make
 24 quite clear in advance of the hearings that Ms. Andrews
 25 is the appropriate witness to speak to how the pension

Page 398

1 expense was built into the case. But Mr. Thies is the
 2 witness to talk about the pension actuarial studies and
 3 the amounts. Not how they were built into the revenue
 4 requirement.
 5 So I would like to maintain that line of
 6 demarcation here and let's just see where the questioning
 7 goes.
 8 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Thank you, Mr. Meyer. Yes.
 9 Let's see where the questioning goes. I recall having
 10 reviewed the transcript from September 21st that we
 11 discussed where this line might be between the two
 12 witnesses. And in the questioning for Ms. Andrews,
 13 Ms. Paisner reached a point where it needed to go into
 14 certain details that required information from Mr. Thies,
 15 is my recollection.
 16 So let's -- let's see where we go. But let's
 17 have the questions from Public Counsel.
 18 Go ahead, Ms. Paisner.
 19 MS. PAISNER: I guess I can clarify.
 20 BY MS. PAISNER:
 21 **Q. Are you able to answer questions about the**
 22 **subject matter as discussed in data request responses**
 23 **where you are listed as the witness?**
 24 A. I believe so with respect to the information
 25 included in the -- in the exhibits if it's how -- as

Page 399

1 Mr. Meyer indicated, if it's how it got incorporated into
 2 the revenue requirement, I may need to defer to
 3 Ms. Andrews.
 4 But we can go forward and I can answer to the
 5 best of my ability. And if I need to refer to
 6 Ms. Andrews, I will -- I will attempt to do that as well.
 7 If that works for everyone.
 8 **Q. Okay. The reason I ask these questions is that**
 9 **you did not file any testimony on pension or OPEB**
 10 **expenses; is that correct?**
 11 A. Yes. I believe that's correct.
 12 **Q. Okay. Would you please look at Exhibit MTT-10CX**
 13 **in attachment A. This is the Company's response to**
 14 **Public Counsel data request 329C.**
 15 MR. MEYER: This is a confidential exhibit.
 16 MS. PAISNER: I understand.
 17 THE WITNESS: And I see in MTT-10CX, I see
 18 five pages. I'm looking for what was a -- an attachment,
 19 but maybe I'm missing it. I see. Okay. Attachment A,
 20 is that what it is? I'm sorry.
 21 BY MS. PAISNER:
 22 **Q. That's the full exhibit, yes.**
 23 A. Attachment A is the -- that's the page I'm
 24 supposed to be on?
 25 **Q. Subpart B, which I don't believe is on that**

Page 400

1 **attachment. I just wanted you to have the full exhibit**
 2 **in front of you.**
 3 A. Okay. Okay.
 4 **Q. In subpart B to this data request, Public**
 5 **Counsel asked the company to provide a schedule comparing**
 6 **key assumptions and costs from four different actuarial**
 7 **runs for pension and OPEB expense for years 2021 to 2026.**
 8 **Is that correct?**
 9 A. Yes, I believe so.
 10 **Q. And the question for subpart B, Public Counsel**
 11 **provided a template table of how the information should**
 12 **be organized, correct?**
 13 A. Yes.
 14 **Q. Okay. In your response you did not provide that**
 15 **information as it was requested in that format; is that**
 16 **correct?**
 17 MR. MEYER: I'm going to at this point lodge
 18 an objection because this really tips over the line.
 19 This goes to a table of before various pension evaluation
 20 results, the timing. And ultimately how they were built
 21 into the case. And that's really the province of
 22 Ms. Andrews.
 23 MS. PAISNER: I can rephrase my question.
 24 BY MS. PAISNER:
 25 **Q. Mr. Thies, can you please look at subpart B to**

Page 401

1 **the question on Public Counsel data request 329 which is**
 2 **MTT-10CX. Let me know when you're there, please.**
 3 A. Okay.
 4 **Q. Do you see --**
 5 A. I believe I'm in the right spot.
 6 **Q. Do you see that there's a sample table there**
 7 **with years across the top and it starts with discount**
 8 **rate, expected return rate, employer contributions, et**
 9 **cetera?**
 10 A. Yes, I see that.
 11 **Q. Okay. And the Company's response to this**
 12 **portion of the data request, the Company provided an**
 13 **Attachment A. And in that attachment, there's a schedule**
 14 **that provides a December 31st run with no year specified**
 15 **in connection with the December 31st, correct?**
 16 MR. MEYER: Again, just let me get the witness
 17 to the right page. I'm going to hand him my copy.
 18 MS. PAISNER: Attachment A.
 19 THE WITNESS: Okay.
 20 BY MS. PAISNER:
 21 **Q. Are you looking at Attachment A?**
 22 A. Yes, I'm sorry. I'm trying to find where it
 23 says Attachment A. But okay.
 24 **Q. Right. So now there's a spreadsheet, right?**
 25 A. Yes. That has years across the top and a number

Page 402

1 of different items --
 2 **Q. Right.**
 3 A. -- down the side.
 4 **Q. The upper -- so on the left column at the top,**
 5 **it states obligation at December 31st. But there's no**
 6 **year stated in that cell. Is that correct?**
 7 A. Yes. But I believe the -- the intent of that is
 8 the obligation across each of those years in the -- that
 9 are identified at the top of each of the columns.
 10 So it says December 31st. And then if you go to
 11 the different columns, it would be as of December 31st of
 12 2021, for example, or 2019, or 2020.
 13 So the December 31st was a reference to that
 14 line but then the years are different --
 15 **Q. Okay. Would --**
 16 A. -- because of the table. How the table is set
 17 up.
 18 **Q. Would you please read those years across the top**
 19 **going from left to right?**
 20 A. So it says -- it says 20 -- the furthest year to
 21 the left, is 2023 estimated, 2022 estimated, and then
 22 2021, 2020 through 2017 is the furthest to the right.
 23 **Q. Okay. And Public Counsel's data request for**
 24 **data request 329 sub B, they requested information for**
 25 **2021 through 2026.**

Page 403

1 **Is that correct?**
 2 MR. MEYER: You'll need to go back to another
 3 page. The question itself, okay. Was that 9C?
 4 THE WITNESS: So 2021 through 2026, is that
 5 what you're saying, referring to Ms. Paisner?
 6 BY MS. PAISNER:
 7 **Q. Yes.**
 8 A. Okay. Yes. Is that my -- yes, that was a
 9 request.
 10 MR. MEYER: I think he's completed his answer.
 11 I don't know what other question is there. Okay. Sorry.
 12 BY MS. PAISNER:
 13 **Q. That was the question. Thank you.**
 14 A. Sorry. And I'm not even ill like Mr. Kalich.
 15 **Q. In your data request response to data request**
 16 **329C that was MTT-10CX, you also stated that other**
 17 **information could be found in Public Counsel data request**
 18 **328C, and that one is MTT-9CX, and other documents**
 19 **referenced on page 2 of the response to data request**
 20 **329C, subpart D?**
 21 MR. MEYER: May I approach the witness?
 22 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Yes.
 23 MR. MEYER: Would you please restate your
 24 question?
 25 BY MS. PAISNER:

Page 404

1 **Q. In response --**
2 A. Yes. I see where you're -- yes.
3 **Q. Okay. So I'm looking at data request 328C and**
4 **329C.**
5 A. Okay.
6 **Q. And these are exhibits MTT-9CX and MTT-10CX.**
7 **And specifically in response to 329, you also state that**
8 **other information can be found in Public Counsel data**
9 **request 328C and other documents referenced on page 2 of**
10 **that data request response. Is that correct?**
11 A. Yes.
12 **Q. Okay. So there are various pieces of**
13 **information is what we're getting at. In order for you**
14 **to answer these questions, there are a lot of pieces,**
15 **would you say? Is that correct?**
16 A. Yes. And there's a lot of data associated with
17 all of the different calculations and requested amounts.
18 **Q. Thank you.**
19 **Would you please refer now to Exhibit MTT-12CX?**
20 A. Yes.
21 **Q. So this is a schedule put together by Public**
22 **Counsel -- -- putting together all of these pieces, it**
23 **shows a summary of the key assumptions and data used in**
24 **the calculation of pension and OPEB costs. And in the**
25 **right-hand column providing a source for each line of the**

Page 405

1 **lines shown in this schedule.**
2 **Page 1 of this exhibit pertains to the pension**
3 **plan, and page 2 pertains to the OPEB plan.**
4 **Have you reviewed this exhibit?**
5 A. Yes.
6 MR. MEYER: I'm sorry. Let's be sure that I
7 have -- I do not have page 2.
8 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Ms. -- let me step in here.
9 Ms. Paisner, we only have one page as well.
10 MS. PAISNER: I believe this exhibit was
11 updated. So perhaps this is -- one moment, please. Let
12 me just confirm.
13 MR. MEYER: All right. At least on our end,
14 we do have a page 2 that didn't appear in my book. It is
15 on the -- the medical piece of this, not the pension.
16 And I think that has been provided to the
17 Commission by Public Counsel as part of a cross exhibit.
18 But I'm not sure if the Commissioners themselves actually
19 have a page 2. I know I did not in my book.
20 MS. PAISNER: There was a --
21 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: I do not.
22 MS. PAISNER: Okay. There was a confidential
23 refiled exhibit that had a second page.
24 JUDGE O'CONNELL: One moment. I believe we
25 may have that. Okay. One moment, please.

Page 406

1 MS. PAISNER: If it helps, it was filed on
2 September 14th.
3 JUDGE O'CONNELL: So I have in the docket a
4 document marked as being filed or marked with a date of
5 September 14, 2022, Avista pension plan key assumptions
6 and costs comparison intended for Thies.
7 And it appears to be what you are referring to.
8 In the docket, it is noted as having been filed on
9 September 15th.
10 We have it. I want to give a moment for the
11 Commissioners to be able to get to that exhibit.
12 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: I have it now.
13 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you, Judge. I have the
14 exhibit.
15 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Okay. Thank you.
16 Now that we're all on the same page, please go
17 ahead, Ms. Paisner.
18 BY MS. PAISNER:
19 **Q. Mr. Thies, do you have that exhibit in front of**
20 **you with the second page included? We can reforward that**
21 **to you as well.**
22 A. I do have it, Ms. Paisner. Thank you.
23 **Q. Please look at page 1 of that exhibit.**
24 A. Just for clarity, that's the pension?
25 **Q. Right. Page 1 is pension. Page 2 is OPEB.**

Page 407

1 **And I -- at this point, I think I should say**
2 **that the subsequent questions will touch upon**
3 **confidential information.**
4 **JUDGE O'CONNELL: Then we are going to pause**
5 **for just a moment. We are going to create a confidential**
6 **breakout session, and we have a list of authorized**
7 **individuals who will be placed into that confidential**
8 **session.**
9 **I'm sorry. Can I have everyone mute their**
10 **microphones? We have a -- apologies for whoever is**
11 **feeling unwell, but we can hear you quite loudly.**
12 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: Judge O'Connell, I
13 think there is a question in the chat about who is "NLMC"
14 in order to figure out who can be in a confidential
15 breakout session.
16 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Let's be off the record for
17 a moment.
18 (A break was taken from
19 11:29 a.m. to 11:33 a.m.)
20
21
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25

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 408</p> <p>1 ***CONFIDENTIAL SESSION*** 2 [*CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY* 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 410</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY* 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 409</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY* 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 411</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY* 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 412</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 414</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 413</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 415</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 416</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 418</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 417</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 419</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 420</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 422</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 421</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 423</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 424</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 426</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 425</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 427</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 428</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 430</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 429</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 431</p> <p>1 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*]</p>

Page 432

1 [*CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*
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19 *CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY*]
20 (End of confidential
21 session.)
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Page 433

1 CHAIR DANNER: Judge, I have a question for
2 Mr. Thies, if I may. This is Dave Danner.
3 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Thank you for jumping before
4 we left. Please.
5 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you.
6 Good afternoon. The question I have,
7 Mr. Garrett said in his testimony that a utility like
8 Avista has an incentive to keep less equity than is
9 reflected in its authorized capital structure because
10 equity gets a bigger return than debt but debt costs
11 less. And this is in his Exhibit D -- DJG-1T at page 56,
12 line 16 to 60. There's the discussion.
13 How does Avista -- how does the Company's level
14 of equity fluctuate throughout the year? Does it go up
15 or down? Does it stay relatively constant? Is there a
16 range in which it normally stays during normal expected
17 business operations?
18 THE WITNESS: So, generally, Chair Danner,
19 when we -- when we look at it, we go out annually and say
20 to the market what we are expecting to issue in equity
21 to -- to try to maintain what I'll call -- my attorneys
22 get mad at me sometimes -- a prudent balance sheet,
23 because I believe it's prudent. And also to maintain an
24 equity layer that is similar on a commission basis to get
25 there.

Page 434

1 There are times during the year -- and we've
2 seen a little bit of that recently -- is because we've
3 had positions where certain -- certain costs, like the
4 energy recovery mechanism to the extent that is, out of
5 the money we incur costs but are not able to recover
6 those.
7 We also had in our last case and our current
8 case before this Commission, energy that the -- the
9 tax -- the customer tax credit in which we're not
10 recovering cash, those are interim and very short-term
11 items that when we look at funding our capital
12 structure -- I don't want to necessarily -- I want to
13 make sure we have an equity layer similar to our
14 authorized -- but when we have higher cap structure or
15 higher costs, we don't just issue equity right away on
16 that. We do that over time so as to spread a little bit
17 of the -- you know, the expectation of getting to our
18 authorized return in a rate effective period, that is
19 always our target. And we will try to do that.
20 In fact, we had to raise our equity layer in
21 this year and in next year in our expectations from a
22 historical 60 to 90 to 135 and 120 million, which we did.
23 And we would expect to continue that.
24 So our target as we're trying to raise equity
25 for the Company is to get to that authorized. Not to

Page 435

1 underequitize the Company, but also not to overequitize
2 the Company. To have an appropriate equity layer.
3 Sometimes during the course of a year or a year or two,
4 that can be off a little bit. And we endeavor to get
5 there as we work through it. And I believe we show that
6 in our forecast we tried to demonstrate that as we look
7 forward.
8 So that is from my perspective how we look at
9 trying to raise equity to make sure that we are as near
10 as we can be in a reasonable level without disrupting the
11 market to our authorized layers, blended because we have
12 different authorized layers for different jurisdictions.
13 CHAIR DANNER: All right. So that's helpful.
14 When you say "off a little bit," I mean, how
15 much -- how much are you off generally? And how long --
16 how long does that last?
17 THE WITNESS: Usually within a year or a year
18 and a half we can correct it depending on how far we're
19 off.
20 Again, we've had a couple of combinations in two
21 years in a row of negative -- I'll call it negative. I
22 shouldn't just -- the ERM has been in an expense
23 position. So we've incurred higher costs and were
24 allowed recovery. So we're paying for those costs,
25 deferring it for recovery, but cash is going out. As

Page 436

1 well as the customer tax credit from our prior case --
2 and I apologize, I don't know the docket numbers. But
3 our prior case was the first one. And then our current
4 case, we have an expectation as well. If the Commission
5 approves -- again, I'm not assuming anything -- you know,
6 those are -- and we've also had some increase in capital.
7 Some of that is due to inflation. And we try to be very
8 prudent with managing our capital and make sure that they
9 pencil out as benefitting to the customers, that it's
10 still an appropriate -- a prudent capital expenditure.
11 But our capital costs have gone up. Some of that we fund
12 even higher than what we requested.
13 So I've got to fund those but we don't
14 necessarily raise the equity immediately for that. We
15 try to blend that in over time.
16 But absolutely the target is to get to our -- so
17 we can be off by half a percent, I guess, if you -- to
18 answer your question directly, it could be that much.
19 And we try to work towards making sure that as we get to
20 or in the rate effective period, that we are at that
21 level. That is our goal.
22 CHAIR DANNER: So would you say that you have
23 an incentive to keep less equity than reflected in the
24 authorized capital structure?
25 THE WITNESS: I don't think -- well, I don't

Page 437

1 look at it that way.
2 The way I look at it is we are trying to make
3 sure that -- assuming there aren't any of these
4 short-term items that if we raised equity -- what I don't
5 want -- what I don't want to do, or I prefer not to do,
6 is raise equity and have buyback shares later because I
7 overequitized in a period when I know the cash would come
8 back in a later period, i.e., that customer tax credit.
9 When those credits roll off, presumably our cash flows
10 will increase to the stated amounts that have been
11 approved by this Commission.
12 And so if I raised equity on that, then in the
13 future I would -- you know, I could get to a point where
14 I would have to buy back shares to again maintain that
15 capital structure. Or I could run overequitize. I don't
16 believe we're incented to underequitize because I don't
17 think that's the right way to look at things. And I
18 don't believe we're incented to overequitize either. I
19 believe we should target -- and this is what we do, our
20 blended authorized return. And from time to time we may
21 be off that. But that is -- I don't look at it as an
22 incentive to try to underequitize or necessarily a
23 detraction to say, well, let's raise more equity and then
24 I'm covered. From a financial perspective, as I look at
25 it, that's inefficient on -- on both sides. We shouldn't

Page 438

1 underequitize because we are getting an authorized layer.
2 We should try to achieve that.
3 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very
4 much. I have no further questions, Judge.
5 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Other Commissioners?
6 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: I have no questions.
7 Thank you.
8 COMMISSIONER DOUMIT: No questions. Thank
9 you.
10 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Okay. Mr. Thies, before you
11 go -- Mr. Meyer, go ahead.
12 MR. MEYER: May I just have one following
13 question based on the colloquy?
14 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Go ahead, Mr. Meyer.
15 MR. MEYER: Thank you.
16 REDIRECT EXAMINATION
17 BY MR. MEYER:
18 **Q. Mr. Thies, does the Company expect to be at or**
19 **near a 48-and-a-half percent equity component during the**
20 **2023 rate period?**
21 A. No. I think we're slightly behind in '23 by the
22 end of -- end of '23 and '24, yes. For the '23 rate
23 period, there will be a period in our current forecast --
24 now if required, we could issue the additional equity to
25 get there. Because, again, I'm not trying to under or

Page 439

1 over. We're trying to balance the timing of that equity
2 to make sure that we have appropriate equity based on the
3 items that I talked about. We'll be slightly under at
4 the start of '23, my understanding of our current
5 forecast, and then get there towards the end and into
6 '24.
7 **Q. So by the end of '23 and into '24?**
8 A. We should be in '24 to be there. Absolutely.
9 MR. MEYER: That's all I have. Thank you.
10 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Okay. Did that bring up any
11 questions from the Commissioners?
12 And I see -- I believe, Ms. Paisner, you would
13 like to be heard.
14 MS. PAISNER: Yes. I just noticed we are
15 still in closed session. I wasn't sure if the
16 material --
17 JUDGE O'CONNELL: I am planning to address
18 that right now.
19 MS. PAISNER: Okay.
20 JUDGE O'CONNELL: So, Mr. Thies, the questions
21 you were just asked by the bench, my understanding is
22 that that comes -- all of that information is available
23 in nonconfidential testimony that you provided, as well
24 as Mr. Coppola, for Public Counsel.
25 Am I correct in that?

Page 440

1 THE WITNESS: With respect to the equity
2 layers?
3 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Yes.
4 THE WITNESS: I'm not sure. I guess I would
5 have to -- yes. Mr. -- yes. Nonconfidential.
6 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Okay. So what I'm going to
7 do, then, for the record and for the transcript when it
8 comes out, I would like to please direct our court
9 reporter to indicate at the beginning of Chair Danner's
10 question that that question and the answer provided after
11 that is not confidential and should not be excluded from
12 the transcript.
13 THE REPORTER: Okay. And then what about
14 Mr. Meyer's follow-up after Chair Danner?
15 JUDGE O'CONNELL: That is also not
16 confidential. So everything after Chair Danner began
17 asking his question, should not be locked out or made
18 confidential when we are producing the transcript.
19 THE REPORTER: I understand.
20 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Thank you. And we're going
21 to go back to the main room. And I am going to identify
22 that testimony and explain that it will be available in
23 the transcript.
24 If there's -- there being nothing else --
25 Mr. Thies, stay with us on camera for just a moment.

Page 441

1 THE WITNESS: Okay.
2 JUDGE O'CONNELL: I'm going to send everyone
3 back to the main room, and then we will conclude this
4 testimony.
5 Okay. We should all be back in the main session
6 now which is not confidential.
7 At the end of what was our confidential session,
8 Chair Danner posed a question for Avista witness Thies.
9 That question and answer did not touch upon confidential
10 information and it will be indicated in the transcript
11 that will be available, that that question and the
12 response and the follow-up by Avista's counsel,
13 Mr. Meyer, is not confidential.
14 The topic of that question concerned the level
15 of equity that Avista maintains throughout the year and
16 whether it stays steady or varies, up or down. And the
17 answer addressed that question. And I will just leave
18 the answer that will be in the transcript to speak for
19 itself.
20 Okay. Now there are no more questions, I
21 believe, for Mr. Thies.
22 So, Mr. Thies, you are excused. Thank you for
23 your testimony this afternoon.
24 THE WITNESS: Thank you, Your Honor, and
25 Commissioners.

Page 442

1 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Okay. So we've reached that
2 point of the hearing where there is no more testimony
3 intended for the day. And I would like to address a few
4 brief matters before we conclude the hearing.
5 First I will issue a notice of bench requests by
6 the end of the day Wednesday of next week, that is
7 Wednesday October 5th. And that notice will include any
8 and all bench requests that were asked during this
9 hearing. And I'm going to issue it next Wednesday in
10 consideration of the Puget Sound energy general rate case
11 happening on Monday and Tuesday and not wanting to get
12 either of the cases confused by issuing those bench
13 requests while that hearing is going on.
14 Second, to address briefs -- and counsel can
15 turn on their cameras if they want to.
16 Legal briefs in this case are due on October 21,
17 2022. I see no reason to change that at this time. And
18 considering that the settlement addresses every disputed
19 issue, we intend to place -- or we are going to place a
20 limit of 50 pages on the briefs instead of the typical 60
21 that we allow. But we encourage the parties to be
22 forthright and use only the number of pages necessary to
23 make its arguments.
24 About the matter of limiting it to 50 pages, is
25 there -- would any counsel like to be heard on that?

Page 443

1 MR. MEYER: Avista does not -- that seems
2 reasonable to us.
3 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Okay. Is there -- my
4 apologies.
5 Is there anything else that we need to address
6 today before we adjourn?
7 MR. MEYER: No, Your Honor. Not from Avista.
8 JUDGE O'CONNELL: Okay. Hearing nothing, I
9 want to thank all the parties, all the witnesses,
10 representatives. Thank you for your efforts both on
11 September 21st and today. And thank you to the parties
12 and the Commissioners for finding a time so close to
13 September 21st when we could have this reconvened
14 hearing. It's much appreciated, and thank you.
15 With that, we are adjourned and off the record.
16 Thank you.
17 (The hearing adjourned at
18 12:31 p.m.)
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CERTIFICATE

STATE OF WASHINGTON
COUNTY OF KITSAP

I, Carisa Kitselman, a Certified Court Reporter
in and for the State of Washington, do hereby certify
that the foregoing transcript of the videoconference
settlement hearing on SEPTEMBER 30, 2022, is true and
accurate to the best of my knowledge, skill and ability.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand
and seal this 14th day of October, 2022.



Carisa Kitselman
CARISA KITSELMAN, RPR, CCR #2018

A				
a.m 372:17 376:2,5 376:5 407:18,18	afternoon 433:6 441:23	appearances 377:3	availability 376:20	379:16 388:15
ability 399:5 444:10	ago 390:8	appearing 378:1	available 385:20	Behle 374:17 379:9
able 397:12 398:21 406:11 434:5	agreement 381:23	appears 394:4 396:19 406:7	388:9 439:22	believe 386:19
absolutely 436:16 439:8	ahead 377:17 384:10 387:7,13	appreciated 443:14	440:22 441:11	390:9 391:20
accurate 444:10	Alliance 373:20 377:15 378:7	approach 403:21	Avenue 373:12,17	392:6 398:24
achieve 438:2	allow 442:21	appropriate 382:3 397:25 435:2	average 389:1 391:16	399:11,25 400:9
actual 389:1	allowed 381:23 435:24	approved 437:11	Avista 372:7,8 377:7,12,14	401:5 402:7
actuarial 396:23 398:2 400:6	amounts 398:3 404:17 437:10	approves 436:5	379:20 381:9,11	405:10,24 433:23
add 382:1	analysis 388:6 396:21,22	approximately 376:4	382:15 383:25	435:5 437:16,18
added 383:12,16	Andrew 372:12 373:3 376:6	area 386:6	388:6 389:13	437:19 439:12
additional 385:4 386:4 390:22 438:24	Andrews 396:16 397:23,24 398:12	arguments 442:23	392:15 393:17	441:21
address 377:4,6,22 378:5,11,24	Andrews' 395:21 396:8 397:14	asked 400:5 439:21 442:8	406:5 433:8,13	bench 380:23,24
379:10,18 380:7	Ann 373:5,16 377:19	asking 393:1 440:17	441:8,15 443:1,7	381:1 386:20
382:13 387:22	Ann.paisner@at... 373:19	assistant 373:7 377:9	Avista's 376:13 379:22 381:6,8	392:6 439:21
439:17 442:3,14 443:5	annually 385:13 433:19	associated 404:16	387:7 441:12	442:5,8,12
addressed 441:17	answer 397:12 398:21 399:4	assume 397:9	AWEC 378:10	benefits 385:12
addresses 442:18	403:10 404:14	assuming 392:18 436:5 437:3		benefitting 436:9
addressing 385:17	436:18 440:10	assumptions 390:16 400:6	B	best 399:5 444:10
adjourn 443:6	441:9,17,18	404:23 406:5	B 375:9 399:25	big 394:18,25
adjourned 443:15 443:17	answered 391:7	attachment 399:13 399:18,19,23	400:4,10,25	bigger 433:10
adjustments 396:17	anticipate 383:15	400:1 401:13,13	402:24	bit 390:6,13,13 434:2,16 435:4,14
administering 381:20	anticipating 397:22	401:18,21,23	back 395:12 403:2 437:8,14 440:21	blend 436:15
administrative 372:12 373:2 376:6	apologies 376:5 389:19 407:10	attachments 394:20	441:3,5	blended 435:11 437:20
admission 379:24	443:4	attempt 399:6	balance 433:22 439:1	book 405:14,19
admitted 375:11 380:1	appear 377:1 383:5 392:16 405:14	attendance 381:22	Baldwin 374:17 379:8,9,10	Box 373:8,11
advance 397:21,24		attorney 373:7,16 377:9,21	Baldwin-Bonney 382:16	BR 381:1
advisory 381:25		attorneys 376:25 433:21	based 389:15 390:23 391:15	BR-3 381:1
Advocates 374:21 374:22 379:14,17		authorized 407:6 433:9 434:14,18	438:13 439:2	Brandkamp 375:3 381:6 383:4,25
affect 384:24		434:25 435:11,12	baseline 385:17	384:1,14 386:9,18
		436:24 437:20	basis 433:24	387:1
		438:1	began 376:11 440:16	break 407:18
			beginning 384:18 385:25 392:19	breakout 381:21 407:6,15
			394:8 396:15	brief 442:4
			440:9	briefs 442:14,16,20
			behalf 377:9 378:3 378:10,16 379:9	bring 392:7 439:10
				built 398:1,3 400:20
				business 374:21,22 379:14,16 433:17
				buy 437:14
				buyback 437:6

<p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <p>C 373:1 374:1 444:1,1 calculation 404:24 calculations 404:17 California 374:9 374:14,23 call 433:21 435:21 Callaghan 373:7 377:8,9 383:8,14 383:18 camera 383:20 440:25 cameras 442:15 cap 434:14 capital 433:9 434:11 436:6,8,10 436:11,24 437:15 care 392:2 Carisa 372:25 444:6,16 case 376:14 380:8 398:1 400:21 434:7,8 436:1,3,4 442:10,16 cases 442:12 cash 434:10 435:25 437:7,9 CCR 372:25 444:16 cell 402:6 certain 385:22 398:14 434:3,3 certainly 383:16 Certified 444:6 certify 444:7 cetera 401:9 Chair 383:19,22 386:22 392:9 406:13 433:1,5,18 435:13 436:22 438:3 440:9,14,16 441:8 change 382:6 387:5 442:17 chat 407:13</p>	<p>chief 393:16 City 374:19 clarification 394:2 394:8 clarify 394:16 395:7 398:19 clarity 406:24 clear 394:7 395:11 397:24 clearly 390:23 Cleve 373:22 378:10 Clint 375:5 387:18 388:5 close 443:12 closed 439:15 Club 374:11,13 379:2,4 Coalition 374:2 378:14,17 colloquy 438:13 column 394:5,10 394:12,17 402:4 404:25 columns 402:9,11 combinations 435:20 come 437:7 comes 439:22 440:8 coming 385:23 comment 380:16 380:20 comments 380:6,11 commission 372:2 372:4 376:7 377:10 380:12 381:19 382:17 405:17 433:24 434:8 436:4 437:11 Commission's 376:19 COMMISSION... 383:19 386:21,23 392:8,10 405:21</p>	<p>406:12 407:12 438:6,8 commissioners 373:4 376:8,25 381:24 382:20 383:1,3 386:19 387:5 392:5 405:18 406:11 438:5 439:11 441:25 443:12 communicated 397:21 communication 382:2 communications 382:3 companies 385:16 385:19 company 384:22 385:2,7,11 393:14 396:20 397:6 400:5 401:12 434:25 435:1,2 438:18 Company's 384:20 394:3 396:17 399:13 401:11 433:13 comparing 400:5 comparison 406:6 compile 382:3 compiling 380:11 Complainant 372:5 completed 403:10 component 438:19 components 390:12 concerned 441:14 conclude 441:3 442:4 confidential 372:19 375:7,8 381:13,16 381:18,21 382:4,9 382:12 383:13 387:9,11 392:20 392:25 393:1 397:3 399:15</p>	<p>405:22 407:3,5,7 407:14 408:1,2,25 409:1,25 410:1,25 411:1,25 412:1,25 413:1,25 414:1,25 415:1,25 416:1,25 417:1,25 418:1,25 419:1,25 420:1,25 421:1,25 422:1,25 423:1,25 424:1,25 425:1,25 426:1,25 427:1,25 428:1,25 429:1,25 430:1,25 431:1,25 432:1,19 432:20 440:11,16 440:18 441:6,7,9 441:13 confidentiality 381:23 confirm 405:12 confused 442:12 connection 401:15 consideration 376:19 442:10 considering 442:18 consolidated 372:7 376:12 constant 433:15 consultation 376:18 381:7 Consumers 373:20 377:16 378:8 continuation 384:7 continue 382:11 384:5 393:12 434:23 continued 374:1 375:4 376:10 384:12 contributions 401:8 controls 385:17 convening 376:10 Coppola 382:16 439:24 Coppola's 384:20</p>	<p>396:20 copy 388:18 389:5 395:20,23 401:17 CORPORATION 372:7 correct 384:25 385:9 388:25 389:11,13 390:1 391:10 392:20,21 394:13 395:11 397:7 399:10,11 400:8,12,16 401:15 402:6 403:1 404:10,15 435:18 439:25 costs 400:6 404:24 406:6 433:10 434:3,5,15 435:23 435:24 436:11 counsel 373:15 377:18,20,25 378:4 379:22 380:4,10,14 381:5 381:12,15,17 382:15 384:9 388:10,15 392:18 394:3,19 396:18 398:17 399:14 400:5,10 401:1 403:17 404:8,22 405:17 439:24 441:12 442:14,25 Counsel's 383:25 402:23 counter 391:3 COUNTY 444:4 couple 435:20 course 435:3 court 440:8 444:6 COVER 372:20 covered 437:24 create 381:20 407:5 credit 434:9 436:1 437:8 credits 385:15</p>
---	--	--	--	--

<p>437:9 cross 375:4,5,7,7 384:7 388:9 393:19 394:18 395:13 405:17 cross-examination 382:15 384:12 388:12 389:5 391:24 393:22 current 385:14 434:7 436:3 438:23 439:4 customer 434:9 436:1 437:8 customers 436:9</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">D</p> <hr/> <p>D 403:20 433:11 d/b/a 372:7 Danner 383:19,22 386:22 392:9 406:13 433:1,2,5 433:18 435:13 436:22 438:3 440:14,16 441:8 Danner's 440:9 DANNER-CHAIR 373:5 data 375:11 379:22 380:1 389:8,25 390:2,25 391:13 391:18 394:4,19 397:4,13 398:22 399:14 400:4 401:1,12 402:23 402:24 403:15,15 403:17,19 404:3,8 404:10,16,23 date 372:24 376:18 380:5 406:4 Dave 433:2 David 373:5,11 377:13 David.meyer@a... 373:14 Davison 373:22</p>	<p>378:10 day 376:17 442:3,6 444:12 deadline 380:10,15 380:20 debt 433:10,10 December 396:22 401:14,15 402:5 402:10,11,13 defer 399:2 deferring 435:25 demarcation 398:6 demonstrate 435:6 Dennison 374:12 379:3,4,5 depending 435:18 designate 381:1 DESIGNATED 372:19 details 398:14 detraction 437:23 different 400:6 402:1,11,14 404:17 435:12,12 differentiated 391:5 direct 385:1 388:19 394:11 440:8 directly 436:18 discount 401:7 discounts 385:19 discuss 390:5 discussed 380:5 387:6 397:13 398:11,22 discusses 396:16 discussion 433:12 disputed 442:18 disrupting 435:10 DJG-1T 433:11 docket 406:3,8 436:2 Dockets 372:6 376:12 document 406:4 documented</p>	<p>390:21 documents 389:22 403:18 404:9 dollars 385:8 DOUMIT 386:23 392:10 438:8 DOUMIT-COM... 373:4 DR 397:5 due 380:5 436:7 442:16 duly 387:18</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <hr/> <p>E 373:1,1 374:1,1 375:9 444:1,1 e-mail 382:2 Earle 382:16 East 373:12 effective 434:18 436:20 efforts 443:10 EGK-7X 389:6 either 437:18 442:12 electric 376:14 electricity 389:2 electronic 376:13 Elizabeth 395:21 396:8 Ellie 374:3 378:16 ellie@sanger-law... 374:5 EMA-7T 395:21 396:4,7 employer 388:4 401:8 encourage 442:21 endeavor 435:4 energy 373:20 374:2,7 377:16 378:7,14,16,20,23 380:8 386:3 388:6 434:4,8 442:10 equity 433:8,10,14 433:20,24 434:13</p>	<p>434:15,20,24 435:2,9 436:14,23 437:4,6,12,23 438:19,24 439:1,2 440:1 441:15 ERM 435:22 Esq 373:11 estimate 390:2 estimated 402:21 402:21 et 401:8 evaluation 400:19 eventually 385:3 examination 375:1 375:2 392:20 438:16 examined 387:18 example 402:12 excluded 440:11 Excuse 394:9 395:22 excused 382:17 387:2 392:13 441:22 executive 393:15 exhibit 379:21,24 380:12,16 389:6 394:2,5,6,18,18 395:5,13,14 396:7 399:12,15,22 400:1 404:19 405:2,4,10,17,23 406:11,14,19,23 433:11 exhibits 375:10 379:20 380:20 397:2,3 398:25 404:6 exists 385:20 expect 376:22 434:23 438:18 expectation 434:17 436:4 expectations 434:21 expected 385:16</p>	<p>401:8 433:16 expecting 433:20 expenditure 436:10 expense 389:14 398:1 400:7 435:22 expenses 396:21 399:10 explain 440:22 extent 434:4</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">F</p> <hr/> <p>F 444:1 fact 434:20 failed 389:22 familiar 389:8 far 397:2 435:18 fast 377:24 feeling 388:17 407:11 figure 407:14 file 399:9 filed 380:21 406:1 406:4,8 filing 380:11,16 finally 394:10 financial 393:16 437:24 find 401:22 finding 443:12 fine 378:18 379:5 finish 376:17 finished 382:10 386:12 fire 385:22 386:2,7 fires 385:4,8 386:2 first 381:14 387:18 394:1 436:3 442:5 five 396:16 399:18 Floor 374:14 flows 437:9 fluctuate 433:14 follow-up 440:14 441:12 following 384:19 438:12</p>
---	---	--	--	---

<p>follows 387:19 forecast 390:2,7 435:6 438:23 439:5 forecasts 390:24 foregoing 444:8 forgo 385:4 forma 389:16 format 400:15 forthright 442:22 forward 389:2,15 399:4 435:7 found 403:17 404:8 four 390:2,8 391:9 391:10 400:6 Francisco 374:9,14 374:23 frequency 386:2 Friday 376:4 front 388:18 389:20 396:13,14 400:2 406:19 full 388:4 393:13 399:22 400:1 fund 436:11,13 funding 434:11 further 438:4 furthest 402:20,22 future 384:22 386:3 437:13</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">G</p> <p>Garrett 433:7 gas 376:14 389:2 391:9,13 general 373:7 376:14 377:9 380:8 396:25 442:10 General's 373:16 377:21 generally 433:18 435:15 generate 386:4 getting 377:16 386:5 404:13</p>	<p> 434:17 438:1 give 388:23 389:18 406:10 go 382:25 383:6 384:10 385:3 387:7,13 388:11 393:21 395:17 397:15 398:13,16 398:18 399:4 402:10 403:2 406:16 433:14,19 438:11,11,14 440:21 goal 436:21 goes 398:7,9 400:19 going 378:1 380:7 380:19,22 381:1,4 381:7,8 382:8,10 382:19,25,25 383:4 386:18 390:10 391:6 392:4 397:20 400:17 401:17 402:19 407:4,5 435:25 440:6,20 440:21 441:2 442:9,13,19 good 376:3 377:19 378:9,15,21 379:3 379:8,12,15 384:14 388:14 393:24,25 397:19 433:6 great 387:24 guess 391:4 396:13 398:19 436:17 440:4</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">H</p> <p>H 375:9 half 435:18 436:17 hand 387:16 401:17 444:11 happening 442:11 Harbor 373:22 Hardwick 374:3</p>	<p> 378:15,16,17 Hayes 374:9 he/him 377:5,10 378:24 379:4 head 382:22 hear 394:14 407:11 heard 439:13 442:25 hearing 372:11 375:1 376:11 377:1 380:5,8,23 380:25 381:2,20 382:8,11,14,22 386:11 393:8 397:21 442:2,4,9 442:13 443:8,14 443:17 444:9 hearings 397:24 help 385:5 helpful 397:11 435:13 helps 406:1 hereunto 444:11 higher 434:14,15 435:23 436:12 historical 389:1 434:22 Honor 377:8 378:9 378:15,21 379:3 379:15 380:13 383:14 389:21 392:11 397:15 441:24 443:7 hoping 391:4</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">I</p> <p>i.e 437:8 IDENTIFICATI... 375:10 identified 381:22 397:6 402:9 identifies 391:16 identify 440:21 ignitions 386:2 ill 403:14 immediately</p>	<p> 436:14 impact 384:21 385:1 386:1 incented 437:16,18 incentive 433:8 436:23 437:22 include 391:12,13 442:7 included 398:25 406:20 including 380:25 incorporated 399:1 increase 436:6 437:10 increased 386:6 increases 385:4 386:4,5 incur 434:5 incurred 435:23 INDEX 375:1 indicate 382:20 383:3 392:23 440:9 indicated 381:12 394:18,19,22 399:1 441:10 indicates 381:17 indirect 386:1 individuals 407:7 inefficient 437:25 inflation 436:7 information 381:14 381:16,18 382:10 387:9 390:11,22 392:25 396:22,23 398:14,24 400:11 400:15 402:24 403:17 404:8,13 407:3 439:22 441:10 instance 391:8 insurance 384:22 385:12,23 insurers 385:21 intend 442:19 intended 406:6</p>	<p> 442:3 intent 390:14 402:7 interim 383:9 434:10 introduction 384:4 393:10 IRION 374:3 irion@sanger-la... 374:5 issue 380:23 433:20 434:15 438:24 442:5,9,19 issuing 442:12 items 402:1 434:11 437:4 439:3</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">J</p> <p>J 373:11 Jennifer 374:22 379:16 jennifer@utility... 374:24 Jim 374:12 379:3 Jim.dennison@si... 374:15 join 376:9 382:21 383:1,3 joining 383:15 judge 372:12 373:2 376:3,6 377:6,6 377:11,15,23 378:2,6,13,19 379:1,6,12,19 380:3,17 383:8,17 383:23 384:8,11 386:10,17,25 387:4,21,25 388:10 391:23 392:4,12,14,15,22 393:5,20 394:15 394:24 395:3,7,10 395:17 396:2 397:17 398:8 403:22 405:8,24 406:3,13,15 407:4 407:12,16 433:1,3</p>
---	--	--	--	--

<p>438:4,5,10,14 439:10,17,20 440:3,6,15,20 441:2 442:1 443:3 443:8 jump 387:11 jumping 433:3 jurisdictions 435:12</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">K</p> <p>Kalich 375:5 381:9 387:7,13,15,18,23 388:3,5,14 392:2 392:12 403:14 keep 433:8 436:23 key 400:6 404:23 406:5 KITSAP 444:4 Kitselman 372:25 444:6,16 know 401:2 403:11 405:19 434:17 436:2,5 437:7,13 knowledge 444:10</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">L</p> <p>Lake 374:19 larger-cost 390:12 Latimer 374:17 379:10 law 372:12 373:2 374:4 376:6 layer 433:24 434:13,20 435:2 438:1 layers 435:11,12 440:2 leave 441:17 left 381:4 383:24 402:4,19,21 433:4 Legal 442:16 let's 377:3,7 381:2 383:24 387:13 392:15 398:6,9,16 398:16,16 405:6</p>	<p>407:16 437:23 level 389:14 433:13 435:10 436:21 441:14 limit 442:20 limiting 442:24 line 384:18 394:11 396:10,15 398:5 398:11 400:18 402:14 404:25 433:12 lines 384:23 388:23 394:21 405:1 list 382:3,6 407:6 listed 383:20 398:23 little 390:5,12,13 394:18 434:2,16 435:4,14 live 386:6 load 389:15 locked 440:17 lodge 400:17 long 376:22 435:15 435:16 look 386:19 389:15 392:4 397:10 399:12 400:25 406:23 433:19 434:11 435:6,8 437:1,2,17,21,24 looked 397:9 looking 389:25 391:4 399:18 401:21 404:3 lost 386:3 lot 404:14,16 loudly 407:11 lower 385:12</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">M</p> <p>M 373:15 mad 433:22 main 374:18 382:11 396:19 440:21 441:3,5</p>	<p>maintain 398:5 433:21,23 437:14 maintains 441:15 maintenance 390:17 making 436:19 management 385:9 manager 388:6 managing 436:8 Mark 375:6 393:15 marked 406:4,4 market 374:23 390:18 433:20 435:11 marketplace 385:14,21 material 397:3 439:16 matter 376:8 397:13 398:22 442:24 matters 382:13 442:4 mean 435:14 mechanism 434:4 medical 405:15 mention 390:19 methodology 388:25 Meyer 373:11 375:8,8 377:13,13 383:2,6 384:4,6 386:14,16 388:1,2 388:8 391:23,25 393:10,13,18 394:9,9,14 395:7 395:9,22 397:15 397:18,19 398:8 399:1,15 400:17 401:16 403:2,10 403:21,23 405:6 405:13 438:11,12 438:14,15,17 439:9 441:13 443:1,7 Meyer's 440:14</p>	<p>microphones 407:10 Mihaly 374:8 378:22 million 385:7 434:22 MILT 373:4 mind 380:9 389:12 389:24 missing 389:19 399:19 Mission 373:12 mitigating 384:21 moment 376:9 386:18 389:22 405:11,24,25 406:10 407:5,17 440:25 Monday 380:9 442:11 money 385:13 434:5 months 390:24 morning 376:3 377:19 378:9,15 378:21 379:3,8,13 379:15 384:14 388:14 393:24,25 Moser 373:21 378:9,10,12 move 382:8 393:1 moved 377:24 Moving 379:20 MSC-27 373:12 MTT-10CX 399:12 399:17 401:2 403:16 404:6 MTT-12CX 394:2 404:19 MTT-8X 397:2 MTT-9CX 394:6 395:4 403:18 404:6 mute 407:9</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">N</p>	<p>N 373:1 374:1 name 376:5 377:13 378:3,16,21 388:4 388:14 393:13 Nash 373:7 377:8 Nash.callaghan... 373:9 national 389:2 391:8 natural 376:13 391:9,13 near 435:9 438:19 nearly 376:22 381:5 386:12 necessarily 381:13 392:24 434:12 436:14 437:22 necessary 442:22 need 389:18 399:2 399:5 403:2 443:5 needed 398:13 needs 382:6 negative 435:21,21 Never 389:12,24 Nina 373:15 378:3 388:14 Nina.suetake@at... 373:19 NLMC 407:13 nonconfidential 375:7,8 387:10 439:23 440:5 normal 433:16 normally 433:16 Northwest 374:2 378:14,16 note 382:1 noted 406:8 notice 380:23 442:5 442:7 noticed 397:5 439:14 number 394:11 401:25 442:22 numbers 436:2</p>
--	--	--	---	---

<p style="text-align: center;">O</p> <p>O'Connell 372:12 373:3 376:3,6 377:6,11,15,23 378:3,6,13,19 379:1,6,12,19 380:3,17 383:8,17 383:23 384:8,11 386:10,17,25 387:4,21,25 388:10 391:23 392:4,12,14,15,22 393:5,20 394:15 394:24 395:3,7,10 395:17 396:2 397:17 398:8 403:22 405:8,24 406:3,15 407:4,12 407:16 433:3 438:5,10,14 439:10,17,20 440:3,6,15,20 441:2 442:1 443:3 443:8 oath 384:2 393:8 objection 380:19 396:17,17,20 400:18 obligation 402:5,8 observer 377:1 observers 376:24 October 380:15,21 442:7,16 444:12 offering 385:19 Office 373:7,16 377:21 officer 393:16 okay 379:19 380:17 383:17,23 384:8 384:17 386:17 387:4 388:21 389:11 391:2,6,12 391:19 392:15,22 393:3,5,20 395:18 396:12,15 397:1 397:19 399:8,12</p>	<p>399:19 400:3,3,14 401:3,11,19,23 402:15,23 403:3,8 403:11 404:3,5,12 405:22,25 406:15 438:10 439:10,19 440:6,13 441:1,5 441:20 442:1 443:3,8 old 390:3 391:10 Olympia 373:8 once 381:17 OPEB 396:18,21 399:9 400:7 404:24 405:3 406:25 open 389:22 operations 433:17 order 404:13 407:14 Oregon 373:23 organized 400:12 outrage 390:16 overequitize 435:1 437:15,18 overequitized 437:7 overlap 397:22</p> <p style="text-align: center;">P</p> <p>P 373:1,1 374:1,1 p.m 376:21 443:17 P.O 373:8,11 page 375:2,10 384:15,19,19 388:21 394:10 395:24 396:1,9,10 396:15 399:23 401:17 403:3,19 404:9 405:2,3,7,9 405:14,19,23 406:16,20,23,25 406:25 433:11 pages 372:14 379:21 384:23 396:16,19 399:18</p>	<p>442:20,22,24 Paisner 373:16 375:4,7,7 377:19 377:20,22 380:13 384:10,11,13 386:8 392:17,21 393:3,20,23 394:13,15,23 395:2,4,11,16,18 395:19,25 396:5,6 397:22 398:13,18 398:19,20 399:16 399:21 400:23,24 401:18,20 403:5,6 403:12,25 405:9 405:10,20,22 406:1,17,18,22 439:12,14,19 papers 390:21 391:1,7 paragraph 390:19 391:5 Parsons 374:17 379:9 part 405:17 participant 377:1 parties 376:19 379:23 381:7,22 382:2 387:6 442:21 443:9,11 pause 381:19 382:5 382:24 386:18,20 392:25 407:4 pausing 396:2 paying 435:24 PC 394:18 pencil 436:9 pension 396:18,21 397:25 398:2 399:9 400:7,19 404:24 405:2,15 406:5,24,25 percent 436:17 438:19 period 389:3,16 434:18 436:20</p>	<p>437:7,8 438:20,23 438:23 personally 390:13 persons 381:21 382:4 perspective 435:8 437:24 pertains 405:2,3 piece 405:15 pieces 404:12,14,22 place 442:19,19 placed 407:7 placeholder 394:25 plan 376:15 384:21 385:9,16,20 387:5 392:17 393:4 405:3,3 406:5 planned 381:10 planning 439:17 plans 385:15 plants 390:17 please 377:4 383:3 384:15 387:15 388:3,21 392:23 393:14,20 395:10 395:17 396:1 399:12 400:25 401:2 402:18 403:23 404:19 405:11,25 406:16 406:23 433:4 440:8 point 398:13 400:17 407:1 437:13 442:2 pointing 390:23 portion 372:19 376:10 401:12 Portland 373:23 posed 441:8 position 393:13 435:23 positioned 383:6 positions 434:3 power 388:25 389:14 390:17</p>	<p>391:13 prefer 437:5 preliminary 381:15 392:19 premium 385:1 386:4,5 premiums 384:22 385:12,23 president 393:16 presiding 376:8 presumably 437:9 prevent 385:8 prevention 385:22 price 390:23 prices 389:2 391:9 391:13,13 prior 376:17 436:1 436:3 pro 389:16 proceed 382:20 producing 440:18 programs 385:9,23 Project 374:7 378:20,23 prone 386:6 pronouns 377:5,10 377:14,21 378:4 378:11,17,24 379:4,11,17 proposed 389:14 396:18 provide 385:14 395:22 400:5,14 provided 390:25 400:11 401:12 405:16 439:23 440:10 provides 401:14 providing 404:25 province 400:21 prudent 433:22,23 436:8,10 public 373:15 377:18,20,24 378:4 379:22 380:3,6,9,11,14</p>
--	---	---	--	---

<p>380:15,20 381:5 381:12,14,17 382:15 383:25 384:9 388:10,15 392:18 394:3,19 396:18 398:17 399:14 400:4,10 401:1 402:23 403:17 404:8,21 405:17 439:24 Puget 380:8 442:10 pull 389:19 put 404:21 putting 404:22</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Q</p> <p>question 383:9 386:1 390:10 394:16 395:8 400:10,23 401:1 403:3,11,13,24 407:13 433:1,6 436:18 438:13 440:10,10,17 441:8,9,11,14,17 questioning 381:6 398:6,9,12 questions 381:13 381:15,17 382:9 382:12,18,19 383:25 386:9,14 386:15,20,21,22 386:23 391:20 392:7,8,9,10,19 392:23 393:1 397:1,12 398:17 398:21 399:8 404:14 407:2 438:4,6,8 439:11 439:20 441:20 quick 388:16 quite 397:24 407:11</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">R</p> <p>R 373:1 374:1</p>	<p>444:1 raise 387:15 434:20 434:24 435:9 436:14 437:6,23 raised 437:4,12 range 433:16 rate 376:14 380:8 389:2 401:8,8 434:18 436:20 438:20,22 442:10 rates 385:6 390:16 390:17 reached 398:13 442:1 read 402:18 ready 382:21 383:4 383:6 393:19 realize 385:11 really 400:18,21 reason 399:8 442:17 reasonable 380:10 380:18 435:10 443:2 REB-1CT 384:16 rebuttal 384:15 389:19 395:21 396:8 397:14 recall 386:11 398:9 recollection 398:15 recommend 380:11 380:14 reconvened 443:13 record 382:25 387:11 388:3 395:12 397:17 407:16 440:7 443:15 recover 434:5 recovering 434:10 recovery 434:4 435:24,25 redirect 375:8,8 386:14 391:24 438:16 reduce 385:23</p>	<p>386:2 refer 394:6 399:5 404:19 reference 394:3,4 395:12 402:13 referenced 403:19 404:9 referring 395:14 397:2 403:5 406:7 refile 395:5 refiled 405:23 reflected 433:9 436:23 reforward 406:20 regarding 379:20 reiterate 380:22 relatively 433:15 reliability 376:15 remain 384:2 393:7 remaining 382:16 remember 395:14 remind 384:1 393:7 reminding 377:3 renamed 394:7 RENDAHL 383:19 386:21 392:8 405:21 406:12 407:12 438:6 RENDAHL-CO... 373:5 rephrase 400:23 replaced 395:5 REPORTED 372:25 reporter 440:9,13 440:19 444:6 reporting 376:15 represent 377:14 representative 383:11 representatives 443:10 representing 378:23 request 375:11</p>	<p>379:22 380:1,24 381:1 389:8,25 394:4,19 398:22 399:14 400:4 401:1,12 402:23 402:24 403:9,15 403:15,17,19 404:3,9,10 requested 400:15 402:24 404:17 436:12 requests 380:24 397:4,13 442:5,8 442:13 require 392:24 required 398:14 438:24 requirement 398:4 399:2 requirements 389:16 resiliency 384:21 385:8 resource 389:15 respect 398:24 440:1 respond 384:19 Respondent 372:9 373:10 response 379:22 384:23 389:9,14 389:25 390:4,11 390:14 394:3 399:13 400:14 401:11 403:15,19 404:1,7,10 441:12 responses 397:5 398:22 responsive 390:14 restate 403:23 result 385:12 results 400:20 return 382:10 401:8 433:10 434:18 437:20 revenue 390:18</p>	<p>398:3 399:2 reviewed 398:10 405:4 revised 390:22 revision 379:24 right 387:15 401:5 401:17,24,24 402:2,19,22 405:13 406:25 434:15 435:13 437:17 438:3 439:18 right-hand 394:5 404:25 risk 385:3,18 386:5 386:7 Roberson 383:12 383:15 Robert 375:3 roll 437:9 room 440:21 441:3 row 435:21 RPR 372:25 444:16 run 391:3 396:23 401:14 437:15 runs 400:7</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">S</p> <p>S 373:1 374:1 375:9 Salt 374:19 sample 401:6 San 374:9,14,23 Sanger 374:3,4 savings 385:2 saying 386:11 390:7 403:5 says 401:23 402:10 402:20,20 SBUA 379:17 SC-6C 379:20 schedule 381:3 387:6 400:5 401:13 404:21 405:1 scheduled 376:21 seal 444:12</p>
--	--	---	--	---

<p>SEALED 372:20 Seattle 373:18 second 374:14 388:24 389:18 405:23 406:20 442:14 see 376:24 383:11 383:20 387:14 388:11 390:9 393:5 394:21 397:10 398:6,9,16 399:17,17,19 401:4,6,10 404:2 439:12 442:17 seeing 382:22 seen 434:2 selected 376:18 send 441:2 senior 388:5 sentence 391:4 SEPARATE 372:20 September 372:16 372:24 376:1,4,11 376:16 381:5 382:14 384:3 386:15 387:2 393:9 398:10 406:2,5,9 443:11 443:13 444:9 service 376:14 session 381:21,24 382:4,11 383:13 387:12 393:2 407:6,8,15 408:1 432:20 439:15 441:5,7 set 380:21 390:24 397:19 402:16 444:11 settlement 372:11 375:1 376:11 442:18 444:9 shaking 382:22 shares 437:6,14 she/her 377:21</p>	<p>378:4,11,17 379:11,17 sheet 433:22 short 377:3 381:19 382:24 short-term 434:10 437:4 show 435:5 shown 405:1 shows 404:23 Shute 374:8 378:22 side 382:1 402:3 sides 437:25 Sierra 374:11,13 379:2,4 signed 381:23 similar 433:24 434:13 single 397:9 Sjm@dvclaw.com 373:24 skill 444:10 skip 387:7 slight 387:5 slightly 438:21 439:3 Small 374:21,22 379:14,16 software 376:24 Sommer 373:21 378:9 sorry 389:12,21 391:24 394:14,25 396:5 399:20 401:22 403:11,14 405:6 407:9 sound 380:8 383:21 442:10 source 394:10,11 394:17 404:25 sources 394:5 South 374:18 Southwest 373:22 speak 397:25 441:18 specific 391:3</p>	<p>specifically 404:7 specified 401:14 spending 385:7,13 Spokane 373:13 spot 386:13 401:5 spread 434:16 spreadsheet 401:24 St 374:23 stabilize 385:5 staff 373:6 377:7 377:10 381:19,25 383:9,12 start 377:7 383:24 392:24 439:4 Starting 396:10 starts 401:7 state 388:3 390:1 404:7 444:3,7 stated 385:25 390:4 390:25 402:6 403:16 437:10 statement 390:15 states 389:13 402:5 stay 433:15 440:25 stays 433:16 441:16 steady 441:16 step 405:8 stipulated 379:23 Street 374:9,13,18 structure 433:9 434:12,14 436:24 437:15 struggle 390:12,13 studies 398:2 sub 402:24 subject 397:13 398:22 submission 380:6 submitted 397:6 subpart 399:25 400:4,10,25 403:20 subsequent 407:2 Suetake 373:15 375:5 378:2,3,5</p>	<p>388:11,13,15 389:21,23 390:9 391:19 Suite 373:17,23 374:18,23 summary 404:23 supplemental 375:11 379:23 380:1 supply 388:25 389:14 supposed 394:24 399:24 sure 377:13 391:8 396:5 397:11,20 405:6,18 434:13 435:9 436:8,19 437:3 439:2,15 440:4 suspended 380:7 sworn 384:2 387:18 393:8</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">T</p> <hr/> <p>T 375:9 444:1,1 table 400:11,19 401:6 402:16,16 take 376:22 377:3 381:8,19 382:24 387:8 392:2,25 taken 372:24 407:18 talk 381:2 390:21 398:2 talked 439:3 target 434:19,24 436:16 437:19 tax 434:9,9 436:1 437:8 tell 377:4 template 400:11 tens 385:7 terms 385:17,19 testified 387:18 testify 381:11 383:5 392:16</p>	<p>testimony 372:19 376:17 384:16,20 387:1,9,10 388:18 388:19 389:20 390:25 391:15 392:13 395:21 396:8 397:14 399:9 408:2,25 409:1,25 410:1,25 411:1,25 412:1,25 413:1,25 414:1,25 415:1,25 416:1,25 417:1,25 418:1,25 419:1,25 420:1,25 421:1,25 422:1,25 423:1,25 424:1,25 425:1,25 426:1,25 427:1,25 428:1,25 429:1,25 430:1,25 431:1,25 432:1,19 433:7 439:23 440:22 441:4,23 442:2 thank 377:8,11,23 378:2,6,13,18,19 379:1,6,12,19 380:13 383:7,17 383:18,22,23 384:6,8,11 386:8 386:10,16,23,25 387:1,3,21,25 388:2,8 391:6,19 391:21,22,25 392:2,3,11,12,13 392:14 393:3,18 395:9,15,16 396:2 398:8 403:13 404:18 406:13,15 406:22 433:3,5 438:3,7,8,15 439:9 440:20 441:22,24 443:9 443:10,11,14,16 Thies 375:6 381:8 381:11,14 387:8 392:16 393:6,7,15</p>
---	--	---	--	--

<p>393:24 395:20 397:23 398:1,14 400:25 406:6,19 433:2 438:10,18 439:20 440:25 441:8,21,22 things 390:20 437:17 think 380:17 390:9 390:15,22 391:7 394:1,15 403:10 405:16 407:1,13 436:25 437:17 438:21 thinking 390:15,20 three 390:24 three-month 389:1 391:16 time 376:4,16 377:24 386:12 434:16 436:15 437:20,20 442:17 443:12 times 434:1 timing 400:20 439:1 tips 400:18 title 388:4 today 376:3,10 377:5 378:23 380:23 381:3 382:20 385:21 386:15 387:2,22 392:13 443:6,11 today's 376:18 381:2 top 401:7,25 402:4 402:9,18 topic 441:14 touch 381:13,15,18 407:2 441:9 touches 387:9 touching 382:9 transcript 398:10 440:7,12,18,23 441:10,18 444:8</p>	<p>Transportation 372:2,4 376:7 treasurer 393:16 tried 397:23 435:6 true 444:9 try 388:16 433:21 434:19 436:7,15 436:19 437:22 438:2 trying 390:14 401:22 434:24 435:9 437:2 438:25 439:1 Tuesday 442:11 turn 380:3 383:1 383:24 384:9,15 387:13 388:10,21 396:1 442:15 two 398:11 435:3 435:20 type 385:15,16,17 typical 442:20 typically 390:1</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">U</p> <p>UE-210854 372:6 376:13 UE-220053 372:6 376:12 UG-220054 372:6 376:12 ultimately 400:20 underequitize 435:1 437:16,22 438:1 understand 388:16 399:16 440:19 understanding 396:24,25 439:4 439:21 unit 377:20 378:4 388:15 unwell 407:11 update 387:4 updated 379:21 405:11</p>	<p>upper 402:4 use 377:5 442:22 uses 389:1 390:2,8 Usually 435:17 Utah 374:19 utilities 372:2,4,8 376:7 388:7 utility 374:21,22 379:14,16 433:7</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">V</p> <p>Van 373:22 378:10 varies 441:16 various 394:19 400:19 404:12 vbaldwin@parso... 374:19 vegetation 385:9 VI 372:13 vice 393:16 Vicki 374:17 379:8 video 376:24 377:2 383:1 387:14,14 388:11 392:16 393:6 397:16 videoconference 444:8 videoconferencing 376:23 virtual 372:11 381:20 382:11 VOLUME 372:13 vs 372:6</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">W</p> <p>waiting 383:2,10 waived 382:15 walk 391:6 Walmart 374:16 379:7,9 want 380:3,9 393:7 406:10 434:12,12 437:5,5 442:15 443:9 wanted 394:7 400:1 wanting 442:11</p>	<p>Washington 372:1 372:4 373:8,13,16 373:18 376:7 377:20 444:3,7 wasn't 439:15 way 373:22 437:1,2 437:17 we'll 381:14 382:24 439:3 we're 380:7 382:24 383:2,9 386:5 397:19 404:13 406:16 434:9,24 435:18,24 437:16 437:18 438:21 439:1 440:20 we've 434:1,2 435:20,23 436:6 442:1 Weberski 374:22 379:15,16,18 Wednesday 380:15 442:6,7,9 week 442:6 week's 397:21 Weinberger 374:8 378:23 Western 373:20 377:16 378:7 WHEREOF 444:11 wildfire 384:20 385:8,15 wildfires 385:3 witness 376:17 381:6,8,9,11 383:25 384:5 387:3,7,20,23 388:5,9 391:22 392:3,14,16 393:11,15 395:23 396:4 397:6,25 398:2,23 399:17 401:16,19 403:4 403:21 433:18 435:17 436:25</p>	<p>440:1,4 441:1,8 441:24 444:11 witnesses 376:24 381:10 382:16,17 398:12 443:9 work 388:6 390:21 391:7 435:5 436:19 working 390:25 works 399:7 worry 395:13 wrap-up 382:12</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p>X 375:9 394:18,18 394:18,25</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Y</p> <p>Yeah 387:23 390:9 395:9 year 391:17 401:14 402:6,20 433:14 434:1,21,21 435:3 435:3,17,17 441:15 years 384:22 385:24 390:3,8 391:9,10 400:7 401:7,25 402:8,14 402:18 435:21 Yochanan 374:8 378:22 Yzakai@smwla... 374:10</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Z</p> <p>Zakai 374:8 378:21 378:22,25</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">0</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>1 405:2 406:23,25 10 388:23 10:30 376:5 10:40 372:17 376:2 376:5</p>
---	--	---	--	--

<p>103C 375:11 379:22 380:1 11:29 407:18 11:33 407:18 11200 374:23 11X 397:2 12 380:21 384:18 12:31 443:17 120 434:22 12th 380:15 135 434:22 14 406:5 1411 373:12 14th 406:2 444:12 15th 406:9 16 388:23 433:12 1750 373:22 1800 374:18</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p>2 376:21 403:19 404:9 405:3,7,14 405:19 406:25 20 402:20 2000 373:17 201 374:18 2017 402:22 2018 372:25 390:8 444:16 2019 402:12 2020 396:22 402:12 402:22 2021 391:14,17 400:7 402:12,22 402:25 403:4 2022 372:16,24 376:1,4,11 380:21 402:21 406:5 442:17 444:9,12 2023 402:21 438:20 2026 400:7 402:25 403:4 206.464.6595 373:18 21 376:11 442:16 21st 376:16 381:5</p>	<p>382:14 384:3 386:15 387:2 393:9 398:10 443:11,13 23 438:21,22,22 439:4,7 24 438:22 439:6,7,8 2nd 374:13</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>3 381:1 30 372:16,24 376:1 376:4 397:4 444:9 31st 401:14,15 402:5,10,11,13 32 396:1,9,10 327 397:4 328C 394:4,19 403:18 404:3,9 329 401:1 402:24 404:7 329C 399:14 403:16,20 404:4 360.664.1186 373:9 372-443 372:14 3727 373:11 380 375:11 384 375:4 388 375:5 393 375:7 396 374:9</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p>4 388:21 40128 373:8 408 375:7 415.552.7272 374:10 415.977.5532 374:15 429 375:8 438 375:8 450 373:23 48-and-a-half 438:19</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>50 442:20,24 503.756.7533 374:4 509.495.4316 373:13 548 374:23 56 433:11 5th 373:17 442:7</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">6</p> <p>60 433:12 434:22 442:20 6X 394:25</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">7</p> <p>7 384:15 703.489.2924 374:24</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">8</p> <p>8 379:21 800 373:17 84111 374:19 85 374:13 8X 397:10</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">9</p> <p>9 379:21 396:10,15 90 434:22 94102 374:9 94104 374:23 94105 374:14 971.710.1157 373:24 97201 373:23 98104 373:18 98504 373:8 99220 373:13 9C 395:3 403:3 9CX 395:2</p>		
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